



THE ADMINISTRATION OF NORFOLK ISLAND MEDIA RELEASE

UPDATE ON THE IMPORTATION OF FRUIT TREES TO NORFOLK ISLAND

Although all has appeared quiet on the fruit tree importation front, work continues behind the scenes. After the official approval of the citrus tree importation protocol by the Minister for the Environment, Education and Social Welfare, a community order was placed in quarantine at the Queensland Department of Primary Industries Facility (QDPI) in Brisbane.

The quarantine protocol for citrus is a lengthy one to ensure that disease free status is guaranteed on trees entering Norfolk Island. This is in place after the citrus canker scare in Australia a few years ago.

In summary, the protocol comprises:

- Sourcing disease free seed of rootstock varieties from Auscitrus or Queensland Citrus Improvement Scheme.
- Treating the seed in hot water, then air drying the seed and surface sterilising it in a sodium hypochlorite solution
- The seed is then planted into sterile soilless media and grown in the quarantine facility where it is inspected regularly by a qualified plant pathologist.
- When this rootstock has reached a suitable stage, it is budded with selected varieties using only virus – free budwood from the repositories at Auscitrus.
- The citrus trees are then grown for a further six months in quarantine at the QDPI facility in Brisbane
- If trees are found to be pest and disease free at the end of this quarantine period, a phytosanitary certificate is issued for transfer to Norfolk Island
- All trees are soil free and bare rooted.
- The citrus trees are checked randomly over a 12-month period after arrival on Norfolk Island.

Currently, there are approximately 60 citrus trees of different varieties in quarantine. They are doing well and some are pictured below.



These are due for release in September, so those who have placed orders will be notified closer to the date.

In the meantime, the Minister has approved the Avocado Importation Protocol so those who did not get an order in earlier and are interested, please contact Nicole Diatloff on 23 595 or e-mail ndiatloff@admin.gov.nf

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