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Pip-less lemons heading to local markets

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Pip-less lemons have become all the rage.

South Africa's citrus market is surging ahead with news that pip-less lemons will soon be available to local consumers following the phenomenal success farmers have had in German and Irish markets.

The lemons, cultivated here from hybrid imports from Australia, have become all the rage in Europe with soaring demand forcing local farmers to extend their orchards.

However, strict licensing of the sought-after varieties is keeping a tight rein on unchecked growth, with only 2000 hectares of the relatively new lemon type under cultivation.

But Hendrik Schoeman, who runs a large-scale citrus enterprise near Groblersdal, said the local market was ready for further growth of pip-less lemons.

He said related farming was fast expanding and should sustain demand as projected numbers indicate strong sales, underscoring expectations that pip-less "will become the gold series of lemons."

In Australia the lemons have surged ahead with phenomenal success, with trees carrying up to seven times a year and farmers aiming at harvesting up to 80 tonnes per hectare annually.

The pip-less fruit is expected to be locally available in leading metropolitan areas from June under a new brand called Lemon Gold.

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