

South African industry experts

‘Challenge for satsuma growers is farming for quality’

South Africa's citrus industry is expected to break all export season records this year.

According to Mitchell Brooke, logistics development manager at the Citrus Growers Association, the citrus industry is heading for a 25% growth curve from now until between 2025 and 2030.

The citrus industry is also a transformative sector, according to the latest edition of the South African Fruit Journal. The Citrus Growers' Association Grower Development Company was developed as a special-purpose vehicle dedicated to address the many challenges faced by black citrus growers. Its primary objective is to make a significant impact on transformation within the citrus industry, while focusing on the development of black citrus growers.

Citrus fruits in Mzansi

When it comes to citrus in Mzansi, we could be talking about any of these four fruits: oranges, grapefruit, lemons or soft citrus. Jacques Burger and his father have been farming with rooibos and citrus on Elandsfontein farm in Citrusdal since 2016. They produce soft citrus (satsumas) and oranges. Among their cultivars are Navels, Midnights (oranges with no pips) and Valencias (good for juicing).

Local and export markets

Experts say soft citrus is more profitable than the Navels, Midnight and Valencia oranges. However, soft citrus input costs are more when it comes to tree prices. Experts claim that the challenge with satsuma farming now, is that growers should farm for quality. Many farmers are now in the soft citrus game, meaning consumers have more options and will pick only the highest quality crops. A very selective market also shows a newfound focus on firmness. Fruit is being rejected for export because they are too soft.

Source: [foodformzansi.co.za](https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/farming-with-citrus-naartjies-and-oranges/) (https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/farming-with-citrus-naartjies-and-oranges/)

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