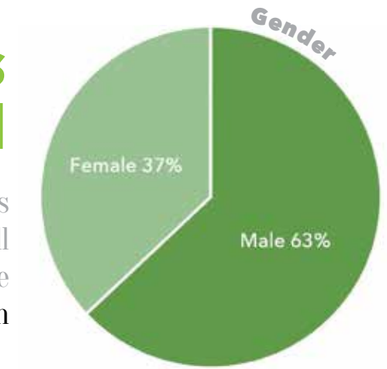
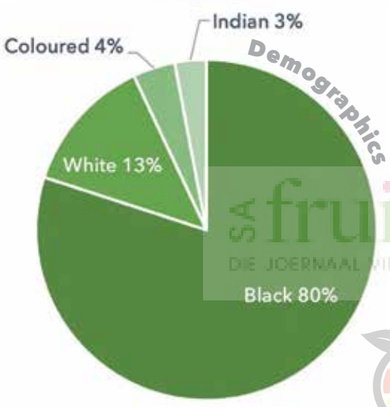
Growing the Citrus Academy Bursary Fund

At the end of 2021, 22 Citrus Academy students graduated from the Bursary Fund. Some of them will be continuing with their studies while others will be seeking employment. By Candice Burgin







microbiology, agricultural management and industrial and mechanical engineering at 19 academic institutions around SA. The Citrus Academy team welcomes these students into the citrus industry and hopes that they grow to their full potential.

The academy is fully dependent on the generous contributions of its funders, without which the Bursary Fund cannot flourish. Sincere thanks to them.

Funders:

- Citrus Industry Trust
- AgriSETA
- ANB Investments
- Villa Crop Science
- Zest Fruit
- Economic Transformation of Black Citrus Growers Programme

Please visit the Pick Me! section on the Citrus Academy website, for qualified candidates eligible for employment: www.citrusacademy.org.za

The Citrus academy wishes all students great success and look forward to meeting up with them in future.

During the 2022 application window, the Citrus Academy received a record-breaking 1 472 bursary applications, underscoring the immense need for the Bursary Fund. The aim has always been to supply a steady flow of qualified graduates into the industry, and we endeavour to continue doing this.

We have selected 72 students for the 2022 academic year, which indicates an increase from the past few years. These students are enrolled for a wide range of qualifications ranging from soil science to horticulture, plant pathology, entomology,



Citrus Academy Bursary Fund students

Citrus study groups and information days

Study groups are used as a platform to share expertise and information amongst growers, including production, marketing and any research guidelines. By Andrew Mbedzi











1. Melton Mulaudzi (closest to camera) and growers at Patensie citrus study group at Boplaas, on Entabeni Farm 2. Growers at the information day at Willowtree in the Sundays River Valley 3. Melton Mulaudzi Mulaudzi (standing, fourth from left) and growers at Bojanala Platinum citrus study group, on Zoutpansdrift Farm 4. Growers at Kat River Valley information day at Peddi Packhouse Hall 5. Nomonde Ntloko (CGA-GDC), right and Londiwe Ngcobo (Citrus Academy) at Kat River Valley information day

Emerging growers have access to nine citrus study groups countrywide. There are three in Limpopo Province (Mopani, Vhembe and Waterberg), three in the Eastern Cape (Kat River Valley, Sundays River Valley and Patensie), two in KwaZulu-Natal (Nkwaleni Valley and Weenen) and one in the North West Province (Bojanala Platinum).

The topics discussed at the study groups relate to the production season and focus areas. Research priorities are also relayed back to researchers through the extension officers, on behalf of the growers. Approximately 25 people attend these study groups.

The information days are usually opportunities to have method or result demonstrations on a slightly larger scale, and are usually attended by approximately 40 people. The purpose of the information days is often to introduce a new idea or crop, and to hopefully pique growers' interest. Experimental stations or other government centres may be used for information days, but it is more impactful and profitable for them to be held on the land of a local farmer.

During the 2019/20 season the attendance of these citrus study groups was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But there was an increase in demand from the growers. Thus, the move from lockdown level 5 to level 1 enabled the CGA Grower Development Company Production and Technical Support Unit to resume the hosting of study groups and information days. All nine citrus study groups are active again, with strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols. The protocols include keeping attendance registers, regular sanitisation, wearing of masks, social distancing, larger venues, and reduced meeting time.

SA fruit journal
DIE JOERNAAL VIR DIE VRUGTEBEDRYF