

CGA launches communication app

The newly launched CGA app provides a platform for faster and more direct communication with CGA members. By Paul Hardman



Over the last 24 months the need emerged for a Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) app, as the citrus industry found itself in a perpetual state of difficulty. In a dynamic operating environment with increasing risk, growers must have the right information at their fingertips in order to make better decisions. For example, awareness of the current developments at the ports can mean consignments could be diverted or re-routed to avoid delays and cost. Thus, the purpose and vision for the CGA app is to provide relevant information to growers quickly.

Launch of the CGA App

Configuration of the core functions of the CGA app were concluded late in 2022, followed by the decision to launch in January 2023, when

more growers would be back from end-of-year leave. The number of app users is increasing fast, with the CGA looking to help more growers get access to the CGA app information.

The CGA app is available for download from both the Google Play store for Android devices, and the App Store for iOS-based devices. Search for "CGA Southern Africa".

Who can access the app?

Currently, the CGA app is available only to CGA members, because the app integrates with the CGA membership interface to manage users' preferences and options. It also brings added value to growers who fund the CGA and its initiatives.

The CGA plans to supply growers with more customised content that aligns with their individual membership information. Users can already determine the type of communication and notifications they want to receive, like:

- logistics notices per corridor (Durban, Cape Town and Eastern Cape)
- market access updates
- CGA regional information – updates on events or regional CGA news



Paul Hardman

- information relating to citrus varieties
- food safety (MRLs) and sustainability news, and details of upcoming events.

The CGA will continue to employ the CGA Comms Tool to distribute emails to growers and stakeholders (non-CGA members).

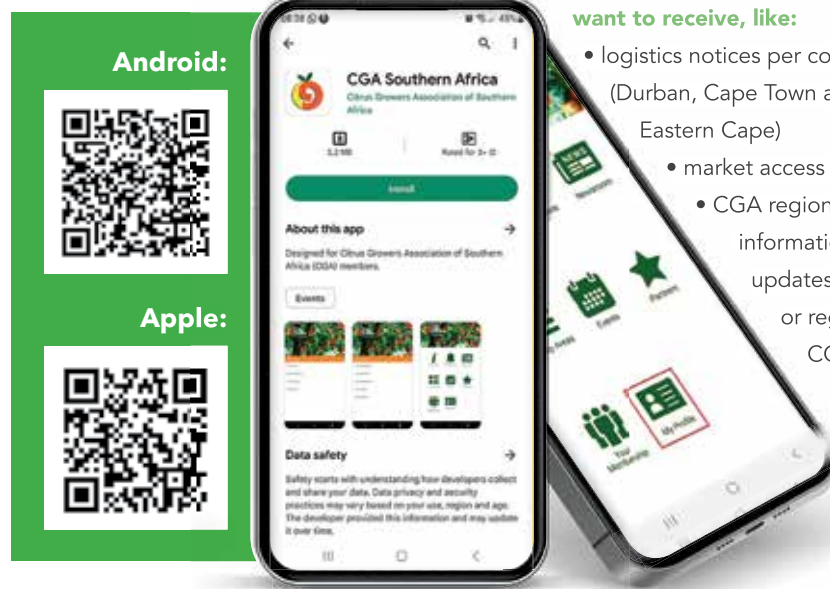
Additional functionality

App users can access information across a number of different themes, e.g. all the contact details for CGA staff, directors and associated companies like River Bioscience and CRI.

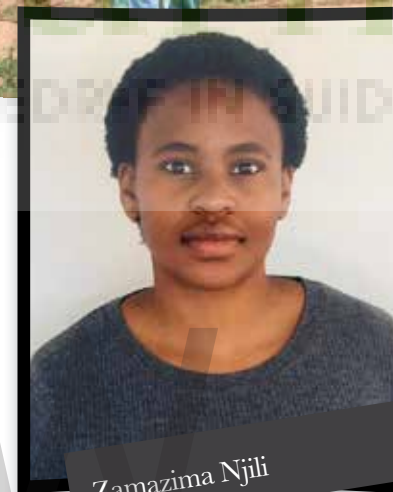
As the 2023 season rolls out, more integration is planned with third-party service providers, to enable relevant packed and shipped figures to be packaged into live reports for users. The aim is to allow users viewing access to the current state of exporters 24/7, outside of published weekly reports. These reports are customisable, based on the user's interest and preferences, such as packing happening in a particular region.

User feedback is vital for the continued relevance and effectiveness of the app.

So, please contact Portia Magwaza at portia@cga.co.za to request assistance to download or use the app, or to share relevant feedback.



BLACK CITRUS GROWERS' significant contribution in KZN



Zamazima Njili

There is potential for growth amongst growers in the KZN Midlands, and the CGA-GDC has the right support pillars in place. By Zamazima Njili



TOP: Nkweleni and Melmoth farmers, as well as DALRRD (Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development) extension officers

The Citrus Growers' Association Grower Development Company (CGA-GDC) continues to support black citrus growers. Nine growers in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), grouped into KZN Midlands and Nkweleni Valley, are amongst the recipients of this much needed support.

Four growers in Nkweleni Valley are situated in Nkweleni and Melmoth and five in KZN Midlands are situated in Estcourt, Greytown and Ixopo. They mainly planted orange and grapefruit varieties, owing to climatic conditions and soil texture. There are three growers currently exporting their fruit to special markets such as the EU, China, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines.

The South African citrus industry takes pride in being the second largest citrus exporter in the world, owing to exceptional quality produce and the volumes that citrus growers produce. The CGA reported a total of 7 706.5 ha under citrus production as of 2022. As the fifth largest citrus producing province out of eight in the country, KZN growers contribute 2 440 ha to this number, which includes 706.5 ha subscribed by black citrus growers. This impressive contribution from these farmers

is due to persistence and determination to transform their agribusinesses into profitable commercial farms.

Growers in this province are focused on improving their production, regardless of the difficult circumstances of past seasons, like droughts, floods, riots, local protests, the cyber-attack on Transnet and the strike that disrupted farm and packhouse operations, and logistics of perishable produce and export quality levels. Their goal for the 2023/24 season is once again to achieve production of outstanding quality with soaring volumes of citrus fruit.

The CGA-GDC continues to support these growers in the form of study groups focused on teaching overall orchard management to those with limited experience in citrus production. "Focus areas include canopy management; irrigation management; orchard sanitation; soil management and plant nutrition; scouting; pest and diseases management; business management; and technical and production support to ensure further development." The ultimate goal is to transform the black citrus farms of SA into sustainable enterprises.