

Abstract:

Persimmons are being established in the Western Cape region of South Africa. Currently the astringent variety, Triumph, is favoured due to uncertainty relative to the budwood sources of non-astringent varieties in South Africa. To date most technical information has been gleaned from the Israeli industry but a number of changes relative to spacing and training have been implemented. The Israeli industry (mostly on *D. virginiana*) spaces free-standing trees at 6m x 4 m (400 trees/ha). Tall nursery trees are being topped at 60 cm at planting, and the initial 4 to 6 scaffold branches are topped during the first winter and are usually again topped in the second winter or bent to enhance precocity (after the second or third winter). This system results in low initial production. In South Africa, large nursery trees are not readily available. We nevertheless mostly employ trellis training systems (predominantly single-leader palmette) with spacings of 4.5 – 5.0m x 1.5 – 2.0m. Trellis height varies from 2.1 – 2.7m with 3 – 5 wires at approximately 0.6m intervals, starting at 0.6m above ground level. It is anticipated that allotted space will be filled by the end of the second growing season. This should provide acceptable initial yields and an earlier economic break-even point. Incidence of the major pests encountered thus far in South Africa is detailed and the rationale for establishing a new industry is briefly discussed.