



# Assessing the performance of finger limes in the Northern Territory

## Background

Diversifying into high value crops:

Finger limes are a native Australian plant common to Queensland and New South Wales. They produce fruit with individual vesicles described as “citrus caviar” which are currently popular as a garnish for food and drinks. The report “New Opportunities 2020: The Next Wave”, lists finger limes as a new and emerging crop with the potential for growth in Australia given the boutique, visual appearance, and possibilities for citrus growers to diversify into this plant.

The crop has consistently high market prices between \$20-77 per kg in the Australian domestic markets (AusMarket 2020 data).

These plants are being utilised by existing Australian citrus growers, as a way to diversify their product with a crop that has a similar agronomy, however they are not currently grown in the Northern Territory, and it is unknown whether a Queensland rainforest plant will adapt to the Northern Territory conditions.

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## Summary

This project has established 8 finger lime fruit varieties at Coastal Plains Research Farm in order to identify which might be suitable for commercial production in the Northern Territory conditions.

Plants will be assessed on their potential for commercial production, time to maturity, yield, fruit appearance, and quality (sweetness, acidity etc.).

This planting will also provide the basis for research and extension into the agronomy of finger lime in the NT.

## Objectives

1. To assess the suitability of finger lime varieties in the Top End environmental conditions and inform local industry about the viability or otherwise of this emerging crop.
2. To engage with the current Tropical Exotic Fruit and Citrus industry in the Northern Territory, building relationships and facilitating information exchange.
3. To develop basic, local grower information on the agronomy of growing finger limes in the Top End.



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## Trial design

The finger lime plants were purchased from an Australian specialist nursery. They are a mixture of flavours, and varied internal and external colour. The plants are growing in raised beds, and spent the first 12 months in a purpose built shade structure to protect them from wallabies and sun damage.

This trial is planted in a randomised scheme with 7 different varieties, each with have 4 repetitions spread throughout the planting. Byron Sunrise was not available in larger numbers and only 1 plant was purchased.

## Varieties

Variety	Colour	Size
Alstonville	Green	3m tall
Byron Sunrise	Red	2m tall
D'Emerald	Green	3m tall
Green Sapphire	Green	
Judy's Everbearing	gold-yellow	
Gold Pearl	Yellow	3m tall
Little Ruby	Red	
Rainforest Pearl	Red	

## Preliminary results

D'Emerald began flowering in late 2024, and has set multiple fruit. The trial is still in the early stages, with the majority of varieties yet to reach full production.



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