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Friday 9th April 2021, 8:02 GMT

New blueberries for Australian market



T&G to begin commercial programmes in December after two years of trials

Trials involved selected growers in five Australian states

T&G Global will market its first commercial crop of Australian-grown blueberries later this year.

The global fresh produce company [secured the genetics for 16 blueberry varieties](#) from breeders Plant & Food Research in New Zealand and US-based Fall Creek Farm and Nursery in 2017.

It has run trials with the premium blueberries over the last two years, involving selected growers in five Australian states.

T&G expects to start commercial sales programmes in December, with a view to supplying Australian-grown blueberries year-round.

"We know Australian's love blueberries, with more than 17,000 tonnes sold each year," said T&G's global variety commercialisation manager, Danny Nightingale. "With these unique premium varieties, we'll be able to grow blueberries all year-round, compared to

them currently being available for only approximately eight months.

"We're incredibly pleased with the results of our trials, with the blueberries being bigger in size and tasting superior to what's currently available."

Trial plantings took place in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia. They involved a mixture of the new varieties, including Cargo, Last Call and Blue Ribbon.

With 30ha already in the ground, and another 30ha soon to be planted, T&G expects volumes to steadily increase over the coming years.

The blueberries will be sold under T&G's Orchard Rd brand.

"This is a game changer for the local berry sector because now we can grow in Australia, for Australian consumers, year-round, without the need to import from other countries," Nightingale said.

T&G is fielding expressions of interest from growers looking to license the new varieties. Nightingale said the benefits of the new varieties are plain to see.

"They're easier to pick and the yield is significantly higher than other berry varieties, which is great news for growers because they'll get more berries per hectare," Nightingale explained.

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