

# In A Nutshell

Spring 2019

**ALMONDCO:**

**Celebrating 75 years in business**

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**30-31 October 2019 | Loxton Research Centre**

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# In A Nutshell

The Official Newsletter of the Australian Almond Industry

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**On the Cover:** Simon Lane, Brenton Woolston, Bevan Shearer, Andrew Lacey and Tim Whetstone at Almondco's 75 year celebrations.

## In A Nutshell

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The Almond Board of Australia is the peak industry body representing the interest of almond growers, processors and marketers in Australia. In a Nutshell is published by the ABA to bring news to all industry contacts and members.

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ALMOND BOARD OF AUSTRALIA

## ABA Membership

### Why become a member?

The ABA is the peak representative body for the Australian almond industry and as such addresses many issues that impact on all participants in the industry including growers, processors and marketers and those that supply inputs. These impacts can be positives such as free trade agreements or promotion to stimulate demand and hence prices or they can involve minimising negative situations such as food safety issues, market access problems, chemical registrations etc.

The ABA develops and drives the implementation of the Australian industry's strategic plan which is done to benefit all producers and other industry participants. The strategies involve building domestic and export markets, the key to strong grower returns, addressing a wide range of risks from the availability of production inputs to government policies that impact on costs and yields. These matters effect on the bottom lines of almond enterprises.

The ABA's whole of industry strategies have been successful and have worked to ensure the large increases in production have been cleared.

The ABA operates a number of activities that support industry and generate revenue to fund its operations and keep membership fees at a low and affordable cost. Being an ABA member provides crucial support for your industry body that we need and appreciate. A strong membership base provides added force in our representation of industry to government and in the wider community.

Join the ABA today, in the knowledge you are assisting the industry and yourself to move forward as Australia's most valuable horticultural industry.

Join the ABA by visiting our website, phoning 08 8584 7053 or emailing [admin@australianalmonds.com.au](mailto:admin@australianalmonds.com.au)

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE

# New-look Board and considerations for 2019/20

**NEALE BENNETT & ROSS SKINNER:** The ABA Annual General Meeting is to be held at the end of October and this leads the Board to consider the past year and the year ahead. For the past few years we have been aware that the renewed expansion of the industry would put increasing pressure on the production inputs necessary to grow our crop.

The focus early was primarily on pollination services. The ABA formed the Pollination Committee and has worked with the bee industry to facilitate an increase in the hive numbers to provide pollination services. This has involved assisting the industry to access floral resources and to overcome the reluctance of some beekeepers in bringing their hives to large orchards requiring multiple suppliers. The price per hive is a major influence but providing confidence in the health of all hives entering orchards is also important.

Water is the other input that was identified as a major concern and a Water Committee was formed during the past year and a consultant appointed to help address the issues of deliverability and availability.

Deliverability focused on the capacity for sufficient water flows in the River Murray during the peak of the irrigation season to meet irrigator requirements for their crops. With concerns already existing about deliverability, the ABA wrote to the State governments seeking a moratorium on the issuing of new water use licenses until a review of capacity to deliver was undertaken. This formed a major aspect of the almond industry water policy. The almond industry can be proud that it has led the way on raising this and other issues regarding the transparency of water market trading and the need for licensing of water brokers similar to real estate agents and stockbrokers. The ACCC Review into the water market is to be undertaken but with the recommendations from this well into the future, the ABA has sought more



Almonds continue to deliver a high return per megalitre of water applied, a key determinant of water use efficiency.





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immediate action to return fairness to the market and achieve a removal of practices that push the price of water to levels that drain the viability of all irrigators.

As the industry grows, the percentage of available water used by the industry has and will continue to grow as trees mature. This growth has been a consequence of the financial performance of the almond industry. Almonds continue to deliver a high return per megalitre of water applied, a key determinant of water use efficiency. Improved yields per hectare are an important way to further enhance our industry's water use efficiency. This was certainly achieved in 2019 with average orchard yields well above the long term average and resulted in a 30 percent increase in industry tonnage to a record figure of just under 104,000 tonnes.

The industry has seized the opportunity to strengthen sales into China offered by the Australia/China free trade agreement reducing tariffs on our almonds to zero and the retaliatory tariffs placed on US almonds by China. In two years, the export tonnage to China has grown from 600 tonnes to be in excess of 30,000 tonnes in 2019/20. The additional 24,000 tonnes grown in

2019 will help the industry to service the high demand for Australian almonds. Domestic consumption is continuing to grow with new manufactured product continuously being introduced onto supermarket shelves. The growing trend towards plant-based diets is also helping to drive increased almond consumption.

With the water storages low and increasing demand for water by permanent crops such as table grapes, citrus and almonds, water will continue to be a major focus for the Board in the next year.

The ABA Board of Directors will have a new look after the AGM with Brenton Woolston, Denis Dinicola and John Maragozidis retiring.

Brenton served as a Marketer Director for 16 years during which time he served as Chair of the Board, Chair of the Processing Committee, and was a member of the Market Development Committee. Brenton has also been a vital member of the Remuneration and Audit Committees, bringing his corporate expertise to ensure the financial and governance procedures of the ABA were sound. Brenton was also the ABA Director representative on the Australian Nut Industry Council which he Chaired.

His contribution to the ABA and industry is significant having been a major guiding figure during the two phases of expansion that has seen the industry grow to be Australia's most valuable horticultural industry.

Denis served five terms, being ten years in total, as the inaugural Grower Director for the Riverina. During his period of service, the Riverina has become a major producing region encompassing a quarter of the industry's orchard area. Denis travelled long distances to represent his region at Board and Production Committee meetings and his preparedness to lead is evidenced by his early adoption of the new Australian bred varieties. Denis has been an important conduit for information on production practices and industry activities back to Riverina producers.

John served as Grower Director for the Adelaide Plains for four years and actively brought issues of concern to his region's growers to the Board. As an organic producer John was able to provide this perspective to Board discussions. In addition to these Director positions being filled, the Board will also be appointing an independent chair in the new year to assist AND guide the ABA and industry going forward.

# ALMONDCO: Celebrating 75 years in business



ALMONDCO  
CELEBRATING  
**75**  
YEARS  
1944 - 2019

**A**lmondco celebrated 75 years in business and 25 years at its Renmark headquarters over the weekend of 21-22 September 2019, dates which were chosen due to their historical significance.

The Co-operative Almond Producers Limited was registered with the Registrar of Industrial and Provident Societies on 14 September 1944. At a special General Meeting held on 18 October 1944 in the Marion District Hall, 38 members were present, and the first committee was elected. By establishing the Co-op, growers took control of their own almond supply route to market.

Almondco also celebrated its 25-year milestone at its Renmark world class processing facility. In 1994 at a cost of \$2.3 million a purpose-built factory was constructed at Wombat Hill on the outskirts of Renmark to process 60 percent of Australia's almonds with the majority grown in South Australia. The 'Co-op' also was renamed - Almondco Australia and

became an unlisted public company but retained its co-operative ethos and purpose to serve its members and optimise grower payments each season.

Almondco's 75th was celebrated with 200 guests attending the many scheduled events over this weekend. The guests were made up of growers, international and domestic customers and agents, staff, long-term business associates and service providers, many of whom had travelled long distances to join in on the celebrations.

Celebrations commenced on the Saturday morning at Almondco's Renmark facility with a wonderful breakfast put on by Renmark's Arrosto Coffee team. Guests were then provided with informative factory tours and viewed the operation in full production.

As the morning progressed, guests were bused on a regional almond tour and were provided with valuable orchard insights at Aroona Farms - Simarloo Lyrup orchards before stopping off at Almondco's hulling and shelling facility. Guests were then hosted by Pike River Luxury VillaS and Wine Centre with delicious catered food and wine while enjoying the amazing views and each other's company.

To top off the day one events and before heads could hit the pillow, a formal dinner and 75-year toast was held at the Renmark Club. A highlight of the evening was the announcement from the South Australian Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Tim Whetstone, of

the successful approval of a \$28.55 million State Government loan. The loan is being provided for the company's next major expansion at Renmark of a high capacity, automated value-adding almond processing facility and new hi-tech sorting equipment to double brown kernel processing while also fully utilising the site's wastewater.

To conclude the celebratory weekend, Sunday lunch was spent at the Riverland's Woolshed Brewery at Murtho, where guests were treated to an Aussie gourmet BBQ, a special anniversary brewed 'Scorched almond beer' and boat cruises on the River Murray.

"From humble beginnings, Almondco Australia is now regarded as one of the top-quality and trusted suppliers of almond based products in the world," said Almondco's Managing Director, Brenton Woolston.

"Our ability to command a premium is a tribute to our people and the businesses that support our growers throughout the whole supply chain."

"Our company's purpose has remained the same for our 75 year business journey – 'to maximise returns to our growers'. The Almondco business ethos and culture continues to be centred around our motto 'built by almond growers for almond growers'".

Almondco's 75th Anniversary weekend was a great success, with guests and management forming great networks and friendships whilst showcasing the Riverland region.

# ALMONDCO: 75 YEARS



Tim Jackson with guest panel: Carol Ye (MD of Farm Breeze International LLC based in Washington, USA), Michael Waring (MWT Foods) and Neale Bennett (Chair, Almond Board of Australia).



Louise Fremder and Sheridan Morton



Growers: Nick and Wendy Pezzaniti



Growers: Julie, Elisha and Patrick Woods



Growers: Brenton, Bronwyn, Wendy & Andrew Sharpe



Simon Lane, Brenton Woolston, Bevan Shearer, Andrew Lacey, Tim Whetstone.



Growers: Luke, Sue and Mark Stoeckel



Stephen Morton and Rock Paige



Stefan Kaercher (agent from Germany), Minister Tim Whetstone and Michael Waring (MWT Foods)



Growers: Billa Gill and Narendar Pathania



Guests at the Pike River Villas and Wine Centre



# ALMONDCO

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**Jonathan Moss | 0437 382 609**  
**Carrie Moss | 0422 213 328**  
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**30-31 October 2019**

The forum is your opportunity to hear all the latest in almond research, speak directly with the researchers and to network with other members within the almond industry.

## VENUES

The **Loxton Research Centre** is a showcase for South Australia's extraordinary River Murray region, supporting and promoting our global reputation as a leader in agriculture and producer of premium food and wine from our clean environment. The Loxton Research Centre recently underwent a \$7.5 million redevelopment, funded as part of the \$265 million Australian Government-funded South Australian River Murray Sustainability (SARMS) Program. The new look centre forms a collaborative hub, bringing together industry, research, education and government to drive agriculture and business innovation in South Australia, Australia and overseas. The Centre sits beside a newly constructed building, which encompasses a state-of-the-art conference facility that seats up to 200 people, meeting areas, demonstration kitchen and flexible working spaces.

The **Almond Centre of Excellence Experimental Orchard** is a 60-hectare site purchased by the South Australian Government in 2016 and leased by the Almond Board of Australia to develop with funding support from the Australian and South Australian Governments. Based five kilometres from the Loxton Research Centre, the orchard is a home for the almond industry's research and development program.

The experimental orchard will trial all aspects of almond growing to deliver input efficiencies and risk mitigation for existing production systems for the hectares of

conventional orchards currently planted in Australia. It will also have trials aimed at developing new production systems in terms of varieties, rootstocks, spacings, tree architecture and harvesting methods to increase nut yields and quality from smaller more manageable trees.

## REGISTRATION

Tickets for Day 1 have sold out, however tickets for Day 2 are still available. ***It is not possible to attend without registering.***

## ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation in Loxton is limited and we recommend the below accommodation providers. These venues are located within the township of Loxton and a short distance from both the Loxton Research Centre and Almond Centre of Excellence Experimental Orchard.

### Loxton Hotel

45 East Terrace, Loxton SA 5333 P +61 8 8584 7266 E [loxtonhotel@loxtonhotel.com.au](mailto:loxtonhotel@loxtonhotel.com.au) W [www.loxtonhotel.com.au/stay](http://www.loxtonhotel.com.au/stay)

### Loxton Courthouse Apartments

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W [www.loxtoncourthouseapartments.com.au](http://www.loxtoncourthouseapartments.com.au)

For further details regarding the event please contact Abigail Quirke at the ABA Office on +61 8 8584 7053 or [aquirke@australianalmonds.com.au](mailto:aquirke@australianalmonds.com.au)



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# Forum Program

Wednesday, 30th October 2019

Loxton Research Centre, Loxton South Australia

8:00	Registrations Open & Sign In	
9:00	Official Welcome Address	Neale Bennett Almond Board of Australia
9:10	Word from the Platinum Sponsor	David Cavallaro Stoller Australia
9:20	Hort Innovation	Anthony Kachenko Hort Innovation
9:35	Integrated Disease Management in Almonds	Jacky Edwards Agriculture Victoria
9:55	An Integrated Pest Management Program for the Australian Almond Industry - One season in	Paul Cunningham Agriculture Victoria
10:15	<i>Panel Discussion</i>	
10:25	Morning Tea	
10:55	Almond Productivity: Tree Architecture and Development of New Growing Systems	Grant Thorp Plant and Food Research Australia
11:15	SARDI Projects at the A.C.E Experimental Orchard	Tim Pitt South Australian Research & Development Institute
11:30	Update on Agriculture Victoria's Mildura Experimental Orchard and Victorian Research Developments	Michael Treeby Agriculture Victoria
11:45	Spur Dynamics	Zelmari Coetzee Agriculture Victoria
11:55	Australian Almond Varieties - Breeding Update	Michelle Wirthensohn University of Adelaide
12:15	Better Tree Performance and Water Use Efficiency Through Root System Resilience Project Update	Everard Edwards Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
12:35	<i>Panel Discussion</i>	
12:45	Lunch & AGM Sign In	
13:25	Almond Board of Australia Annual General Meeting	Neale Bennett - Chairman Ross Skinner - Chief Executive Officer
14:15	Pollination Supply Issues	Ben Hooper South Australian Apiarists Association
14:35	Bee Friendly Plantings	Katja Hogendoorn University of Adelaide
14:55	Hive Health	Mark Goodwin Ecrotek
15:15	<i>Panel Discussion</i>	
15:25	Afternoon Tea	
15:55	Water Trading Market/Deliverability	Phil Grahame Ruralco Water
16:15	Managing Almond Production in a Variable and Changing Climate	Dane Thomas South Australian Research and Development Institute
16:35	<i>Panel Discussion</i>	
16:45	Day Close	Neale Bennett Almond Board of Australia
16:45 - 17:45	Light Catering & Refreshments	

# Forum & Field Day Program

Thursday, 31st October 2019

Almond Centre of Excellence Experimental Orchard,  
Loxton South Australia

8:30 Registrations & Sign In

Breakfast Roll & Coffee

Catering Sponsored By:



9:00 Welcome Address & Overview of Almond Orchard of Excellence

Ross Skinner  
Almond Board of Australia

9:10 Word from the Catering Sponsor

T.B.A  
Conservis Corporation

9:20 - 9:40 The Effects of Winter Banding of Nitrogen with Compost Application in Almonds

Upul Gunawardena  
Select Harvest Ltd

9:40 - 10:00 On Farm Hulling & Moisture Management

John Fielke  
University of South Australia

10:00 - 10:20 Gallard Mulcher & Seed Terminator Demonstration

10:30 - 13:00 Machinery Site Visits & Demonstrations

11:00-13:00 Sausage Sizzle Open

Catering Sponsored By:



12:00 - 12:20 Plant Based Irrigation Decisions

Mark Heyward  
Phytech

12:20 - 12:40 Irrigation Best Practice Management

Mark Skewes  
South Australian Research & Development Institute

12:40 - 13:00 Almond Harvesting & Drying & Update on Californian Almond Trials

Michael Coates  
Plant & Food Research Australia

13:00 - 14:00 Experimental Orchard Trial Tours

14:15

Day Close

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# Domestic Market Development Program

Demand for almonds as an ingredient for new products remains strong. In the 12 months to September 2019, 299 new products were launched within the Australian market with almonds as an ingredient. This compares to 147 new products with cashews, 90 products with hazelnuts and 59 products with macadamias. Almonds continues to be used more frequently than any other tree nut or peanuts. (Note, that in this period, 193 new products were launched using peanuts).

One product sub-category growing strongly globally from a relatively small base is meat-substitutes. The trend towards meat-free diets or reduced-meat frequency diets continues to grow. Plant foods and plant protein are viewed by a growing segment of consumers as better for their health and better for our planet. The term 'Flexitarianism' has been created to describe consumers wanting to reduce their meat consumption. Over the past year, 18 meat-substitute products with almonds as a key ingredient have been launched in a range of countries. The Innova database is yet to identify such a product launched in Australia. This would appear to be an opportunity within our domestic market.

Our domestic marketing program continues to drive the nutritional importance of almonds to key health professional audiences. In August, we exhibited at the Dietitians Association of Australia annual conference. We worked with Nutrition Australia to present the principal Lifestyle Health benefits of almonds regarding heart health, diabetes and healthy weight. Our almond samples and convenient 30 gram heart-shaped and footy-themed snack tins were very well received.

Another key activity within the last quarter was a webinar on heart health, conducted by Nutrition Australia that also targeted dietitians and nutritionists. We had two expert speakers: Dr Elizabeth Neale from the University of Wollongong and Sian Armstrong from the Heart Foundation. We had 211 dietitians participate in the webinar, either 'live' or who have viewed it online in our Health Professional section on our website.

We have also used our growing social media communities to communicate our heart health credentials. We leveraged the opportunity of World Heart Health Day on Sunday September 29 to post about almonds and heart health on our Facebook and Instagram sites. Our Facebook community is now in excess of 120,000 people.



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China Tree Nut Conference



ANUGA: Australian Almonds booth

# Export Market Development Program

During the last quarter, the Australian Almonds export development program has been active in both our Established and Emerging Markets. In October, we exhibited at the Anuga Trade Fair in Cologne, Germany targeting our European customers which historically has been our largest export region. In terms of our Emerging Markets, we conducted a trade mission to Jakarta, Indonesia in July and participated in the China Tree Nut Conference in Zhengzhou, China in August.

## Anuga

The 2019 Anuga trade fair ran from October 5 to 9 in Cologne, Germany. Anuga is one of the largest fine food fairs in the world, attracting approximately 200,000 trade visitors and more than 7,000 exhibitors. Our Australian Almonds exhibition booth was situated in the Fine Foods Hall, adjacent to the USA pavilion. This location offered significant convenience to our European customers who visited both the Australian and Californian almond exporters.

## Food & Hotel Indonesia

In July, we conducted a trade mission to Jakarta, centered around the Food & Hotel Indonesia exhibition which ran from July 24 to 27. Our mission included an Australian Almonds dinner for key leaders in food service, sponsored by the Victorian Government's Trade Commission in Jakarta; a Trade seminar facilitated by the Austrade team in Jakarta and a visit to a traditional consumer market. These activities augmented our exhibition booth which was located within

the Australian pavilion. Growing our Australian almond market in Indonesia is a strategically important program given that Indonesia has the fourth largest global population with a rapidly increasing 'middle class' or 'consumer class'.

## China Tree Nut Conference

In August, the Australian almond industry participated in the 2019 China Tree Nut Conference in Zhengzhou, which is in the Henan Province in China. It ran from August 5 to 7. This conference is organised by the China Chamber of Commerce (CFNA) and is an annual meeting of over 500 participants from the Chinese nut industry representing all tree nuts and some dried fruits.

Within the presentation session devoted to almonds, Toby Smith from Olam and Joseph Ebbage from the Almond Board of Australia delivered an update on the Australian almond industry.

We also had a booth in the exhibition hall to highlight our product quality and range as well as provide information resources about our Australian almond industry.



ANUGA: ABA CEO, Ross Skinner, speaking with delegates



ANUGA: Australian Almonds booth



FOOD & HOTEL INDONESIA



FOOD & HOTEL INDONESIA



FOOD & HOTEL INDONESIA



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## INTEGRATED DISEASE MANAGEMENT

# Disease project makes

**AL16005: Lower limb dieback** is an issue that in current production is widespread. There are some theories as to why it is occurring but there is no verified evidence determining the primary cause. A component of the Integrated Disease Management Program is to assess the issue and to provide a greater understanding of the disease. The following text is extracted from a Fact Sheet produced through project AL16005 that is now available on the Australian almonds industry website.

### Background

Lower limb dieback (LLD) is an emerging issue in almond production regions around the world, causing concern amongst growers in California (Doll 2014) and now in Australia. In a recent almond grower census, 60% of respondents indicated that LLD is present in their orchard, and more than 50% of participants reported that LLD is having a medium to high impact on yield (Edwards 2018). The LLD syndrome is poorly understood and the cause of the syndrome is unknown.

To improve our understanding of LLD, in particular the role of trunk disease pathogens, researchers at SARDI are collaborating on the Hort Innovation project 'An Integrated Disease Management Program for the Australian Almond Industry' led by Agriculture Victoria. In order to determine the distribution and significance of LLD in Australia, industry wide disease surveys have been underway since 2018 and will be continued through to the year 2020. Overall, 1,169 ha of almond plantings within 10,179 ha of orchards selected from regions across New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia were assessed. Plant samples were collected in South Australia, and potential pathogens isolated and identified to help determine the causes of LLD. This research aims to help to develop management strategies for trunk diseases and LLD for the Australian industry.

### Disease Survey

The disease surveys have so far confirmed the grower reports that the issue is wide spread and occurs in all growing regions of Australia. Data from the South Australian growing regions revealed that LLD symptom expression occurred in blocks aged 8 years and above, which concurs with Californian research.



# progress on identifying lower limb dieback



## Pathogens in LLDA

In California, commonly identified fungal pathogens isolated from symptomatic LLD samples include *Botryosphaeria* and *Phomopsis* species, with *Eutypa lata* and *Cytospora* species being isolated less frequently (Doll 2009, Lampinen, Adaskaveg et al. 2009, Michailides, Morgan et al. 2009). In Australia, trees with trunk disease and dieback symptoms in the Riverland and the Adelaide Plains have been sampled extensively. Commonly occurring fungal organisms found in the diseased tissues have been identified as potential trunk disease pathogens, based on the literature. These include, *Botryosphaeriaceae* spp., *Cytospora* spp., *E. lata* and *Pleurostoma richardsiae*.

Chlorotic leaves (A-B) and dead branches (C-D) associated with lower limb dieback syndrome. E. Brown spots found under the bark of a branch with foliar LLD symptoms. F-G. Internal staining within an LLD symptomatic branch.



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# Rootstock trial: evaluating the yield findings



**JOSH FIELKE:** With the industry now currently sitting at 45,094 hectares and 76 percent of this planted to Nemaguard (34,295ha), it is no surprise that our knowledge and practices surrounding irrigation and fertigation are designed to get the most out of this rootstock. In the case of the rootstock trial, this is something that is beginning to be observed. This article will discuss the different level of yields that have been observed with indicative results starting to surface. While this article focuses predominantly on yield other information is still being collected and will be presented in future reports. It is important to note all results are indicative and need more data to determine the significance of these results.

Now in its 7th leaf, the rootstock trial has just entered the mature yield phase and is beginning to show greater differences between the various rootstocks. The trial site produced average kernel yields between 2,910kg/ha and 4,500kg/ha. However, as we are hearing throughout the industry, yield should not be the only factor when determining a rootstock selection. If we compare some of the physiological traits such as canopy size, kernel size, crack-out and nutrition readings against the yield, some interesting theories can be created. These traits, as well as the other traits not mentioned, are also fundamental characteristics that determine rootstock suitability and will be described when evaluating the trial results.

To begin the evaluation, Figure 1 (page 21) demonstrates the cumulative yields that have been observed at the trial for each rootstock. This graph includes an overlay of the average canopy efficiency (2017/18 and 2018/19) to compare the level of kernel production in grams per m<sup>3</sup> for each rootstock. This is an interesting comparison and can assist in producing some theories about application and potentially even

***Canopy efficiency is the measure of kernel weight (grams) produced per area (m<sup>3</sup>) of canopy for each tree. In this trial canopy efficiency provides an indication of each rootstock's ability to convert inputs into productivity (kernel yield) under the same management practice.***

timing of inputs. Furthermore, it helps to identify rootstocks that are suited to current industry practices and perhaps rootstocks that could potentially perform better under a different regime.

Focusing on canopy volume, when the canopy efficiency values are overlaid across the canopy volume for just 2018/19 (Figure 2), it can be observed that once the tree is mature and at a greater size than that of Nemaguard the canopy efficiency decreases. This is the first observation of this effect in the trial, so it will be interesting to note the differences in canopies' efficiencies as the trees further develop. If the trend does continue, the next step will be to understand the reason as to why this occurs.

One suggestion is that our management practices have historically focused on producing trees on Nemaguard and farm management practices have traditionally been based on managing trees of that tree size. Considering the amount of water and nutrition applied, one could ask the question: How much of this is being used to develop canopy and how much is being converted into kernel? One of the smaller sized canopies, Krymsk 86, produced the lowest 'crack-outs' with larger hulls. This is thought to be resultant from excess potassium with Krymsk 86 having the highest reading of potassium in the leaf. This raises the question about the fertiliser requirements for these varieties and perhaps, for Krymsk 86, less nutrition is required, at least for potassium. (Cont...)

## IN THE ORCHARD



If you compare Krymsk 86 with the largest trees in the trial by volume, Bright's Hybrid, it consistently produces kernels that are lighter in weight. This raises the question about whether inputs are hitting the critical thresholds to maximise performance of the rootstock. Naturally, the differences in kernel size are starting to become more apparent as the differences in tree size becomes greater. But what effect does this have on yield? In Figure 1, after the 2018/19 harvest, Monegro and GF749 produce the highest cumulative yield. Despite the high yield they also appear to have relatively low canopy efficiencies suggesting there could be improvements in converting management inputs into yield rather than tree growth. The rootstocks appear to have been able to minimise the inefficiency than that of the other large rootstocks. In 2018/19 Monegro and GF749 had a crack-

out greater than 30% and a kernel size that was only slightly lower than the more efficient canopies. In comparison Bright's Hybrid, produced the largest tree canopy but had the lowest canopy efficiency with the smallest kernel and a low crack-out. As such, If we convert the 2018/19 season yield to the number of kernels produced per tree, Bright's Hybrid produced more kernels than Monegro (3,595,176 vs 3,563,026), but Bright's Hybrid canopy efficiency was lower than Monegro meaning the nuts produced were smaller and the average yield per hectare was less by 280kg. Assuming \$7 per kilo this weight difference is valued at \$1,960/ha if fully planted.

This trial has raised many questions about how we manage orchards with different rootstocks and the effect on canopy volumes and yields. One indicative result is that in order to optimise the various rootstocks being trialled we should be focusing on management techniques that increase the efficiency of the canopy, to get the most out of the inputs. There is also a financial benefit in producing a larger, higher quality kernel so there is a reward in doing so. How we optimise the efficiency of larger trees is one thing that needs to be considered and further explored addressing several elements such as application timing, rates, distribution and input amounts. This article is just the beginning of the evaluation of the rootstock trial with a lot more considerations to be made. These will be further explored and discussed in future updates and compiled in the end of project rootstock selection booklet.

*(This update follows on from a previous project update about the trial which can be accessed [HERE](#)).*

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**Hort Innovation**  
Strategic levy investment

**ALMOND FUND**

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation using the almond research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government. For more information on the fund and strategic levy investment visit [horticulture.com.au](http://horticulture.com.au)

# IN THE ORCHARD

**Figure 1**

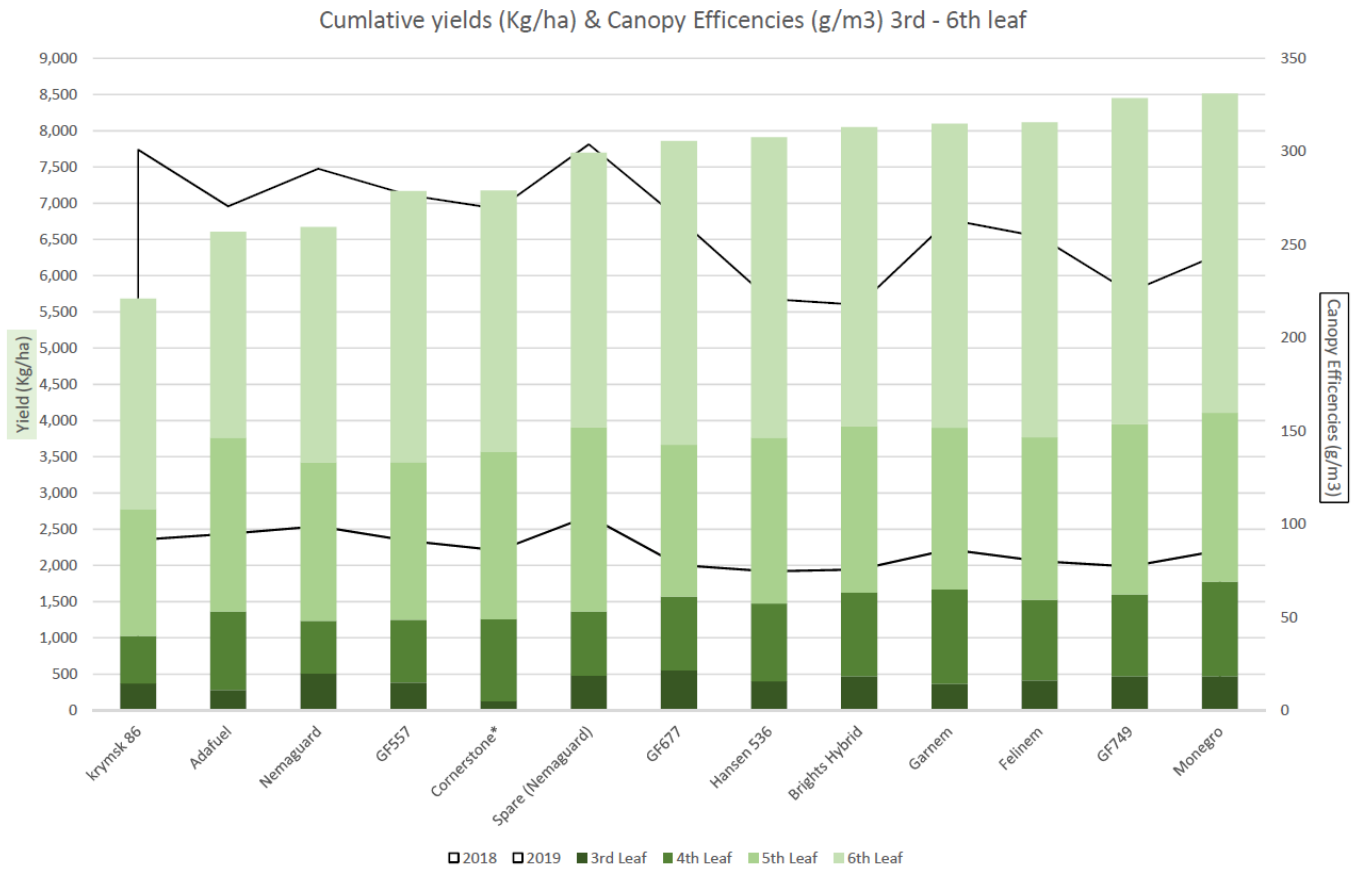


Figure 1: Cumulative yields for the various rootstocks by hectare against the cumulative canopy efficiencies for 2017/18 and 2018/19 (g/m<sup>3</sup>).

**Figure 2**

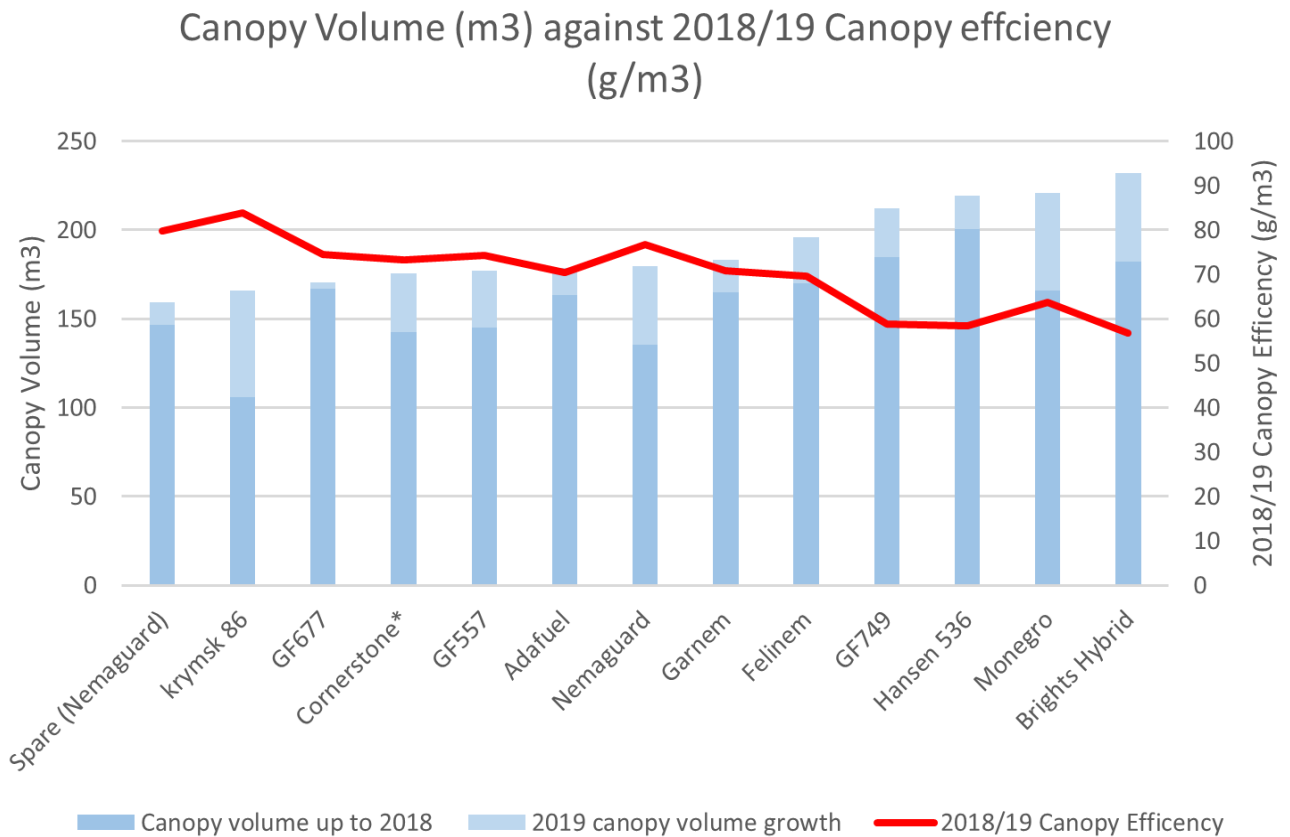


Figure 2: Canopy Volume (m<sup>3</sup>) against canopy efficiency (g/m<sup>3</sup>) ordered from smallest rootstock tree to largest

# Almond lab technician claims food safety award at national event

The Australian almond industry was in the spotlight recently at the annual APAC Food Safety Awards where Hayley Pfeifer, Laboratory Technician at Riverland Almonds, claimed the *Leaders of the Future* award. Pfeifer was present when the winner was announced at the Gala Dinner in Sydney, as part of the annual APAC Food Safety Conference held on 20–22 August. The award includes a food safety learning scholarship with SAI Global, valued at \$10,000.



Riverland Almonds Laboratory Technician, Hayley Pfeifer, pictured with her APAC Food Safety award.

Pfiefer is relatively new to the almond industry, having relocated to the Riverland in 2018 from Beaufort, Victoria after successfully securing a laboratory technician role at Riverland Almonds in Loxton. Previously, Pfiefer completed a bachelor degree in Human Nutrition majoring in Biochemistry at Latrobe University in 2017. Whilst she began her degree with a focus on health, she soon discovered her passion for food and food science.

"My role at Riverland Almonds consists of testing all stock that arrives to the processing factory for pathogens and food safety risks as well as indicators of shelf life and product stability. I also have had the opportunity to be involved in maintaining quality and retail compliance under a rigorous schedule within our team," said Pfiefer.

Pfiefer was nominated for the award by her colleague, Technical Officer Renee Morelli, whom she works alongside.

"I was very honoured that Renee had thought of me when she saw the award and even more so that she would nominate me. It was very exciting just to be getting some in-house recognition from my manager. I certainly did not expect to be successful in receiving the award!" said Pfiefer.

Entrants in the *Leaders of the Future* award category displayed experience showing a unique perspective on food safety, a drive towards continuous improvement and leadership potential through vision.

Their applications required them to submit a written response to two questions which addressed their career ambitions and a food safety issue that they felt strongly about. Pfiefer's responses were articulate and emphasised the importance of improved microbiological control of

ready to eat foods in Australia and the impact that product recalls have on business.

"Food recall due to microbiological contamination in Australia is still an issue that businesses and citizens face alike. The trend, according to Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (2019), of microbiological contamination of foods over the years is conflicting with 20, 8, and 20 cases being reported in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively. Increases in the capabilities of microbiological testing technologies would suggest that a decrease in microbial recalls could be expected, however with increases in technology comes significant costs to businesses, some of which not having the throughput to invest in such technologies or trained experienced staff", explains Pfiefer in her application.

"Moreover, FSANZ has invested a significant amount of time and revenue into the nutritional analysis data base for a significant amount of food products that are used in the Australian market that is available on their website for public use, however in contrast, the standard for microbiological limits for food products is very generic.

To reduce the risk of microbial contaminants, businesses should be able to readily and easily access information on the microorganisms that pose a threat to the food product that they are producing. It is known that although businesses supplying to the food chain in Australia are required to have a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) certificate and many chose to undergo additional quality certification that allows them to be awarded retail contracts, the Australian government currently do not actively enforce microbiological control on food products that are sold in the Australian market. In considering this point, there are

food products consumed regularly in the Australian food market that are constantly recalled because of microbiological contamination such as eggs, dairy and poultry. These food products are also considered high risk for microbial inhabitants.

Due to the high level of recalls that currently occur and the cost that these would have on not only the health care system but also on the Australia economy in decreased product sales, investing in a government run control system to monitor the microbiological presence on food products in Australia would be beneficial.

A small audit could be conducted on businesses annually on a random basis. This would ensure that businesses have appropriate controls in place to reduce the risk of pathogen contamination in their food product, that include adequate laboratory testing, appropriate sampling techniques and acceptable management of contaminated stock. Such a system could be adopted to reduce associated costs with recalls, regulate testing expectations within food processing businesses and importantly, protect the health of Australians".

Grant Birrell, CEO of Nut Producers Australia and Riverland Almonds, congratulated Pfiefer on her achievements.

"This award is recognition of the endeavours Hayley has achieved at Riverland Almonds. This will provide an opportunity to further develop her knowledge base and skills in managing food safety in the face of increasingly stringent food safety demands.

"Further, it is important we develop champions to drive excellence for the future prosperity of the almond industry".

The APAC Food Safety Awards also recognised winners in the categories of *Innovators in Food Safety* and the *Ross Peters Award for Excellence in Food Safety*.



# LEADERSHIP FUND

**The Hort Frontiers Leadership Fund was established by Hort Innovation in 2015. Under this initiative, Hort Innovation and industry co-invest in programs to identify, build and empower future leaders at all stages of their career. To date, the six inaugural investments under this fund represent a \$13.3 million injection into building leadership across the Australian horticultural sector. A range of opportunities and scholarships are available for industry members at all stages of their career.**

## **Churchill Fellowships (LP16002)**

This fully paid scholarship builds leadership across the sector by providing the opportunity for three selected growers each year to travel internationally (from four weeks to a maximum of eight weeks) to investigate a research question which has the potential to benefit the Australian horticultural sector. No prescribed qualifications are required in order to apply for a Churchill Fellowship, however, the Fellowship is not designed to enable applicants to complete tertiary qualifications. Applications opened in February and close in April each year.

**More information is available at the Churchill Trust website at [www.churchilltrust.com.au/ application-process/how-to-apply/](http://www.churchilltrust.com.au/application-process/how-to-apply/)**

## **Emerging Leaders in Protected Cropping (LP18000)**

Protected cropping is expected to drive the next wave of profitability (domestic and export) for the Australian horticultural sector, with many growers already in protected cropping planning for significant expansion that will require hundreds of new staff to meet projected demand. This demand will be particularly pronounced in leadership positions as businesses become increasingly sophisticated. This course is currently being developed and the first student intake is planned for July 2020. It will deliver a suite of subjects (units) that will be offered as a one-year Masterclass in Protected Cropping, offering a range of graded qualifications culminating in a Graduate Diploma. It will include a combination of flexible online learning modules and intensive on-site workshops.

**More information is available by contacting Jane Wightman by email at [jane.wightman@horticulture.com.au](mailto:jane.wightman@horticulture.com.au) or give her a call on 0427 142 046.**

## **Advancing women's leadership across the Australian horticulture sector (LP16000)**

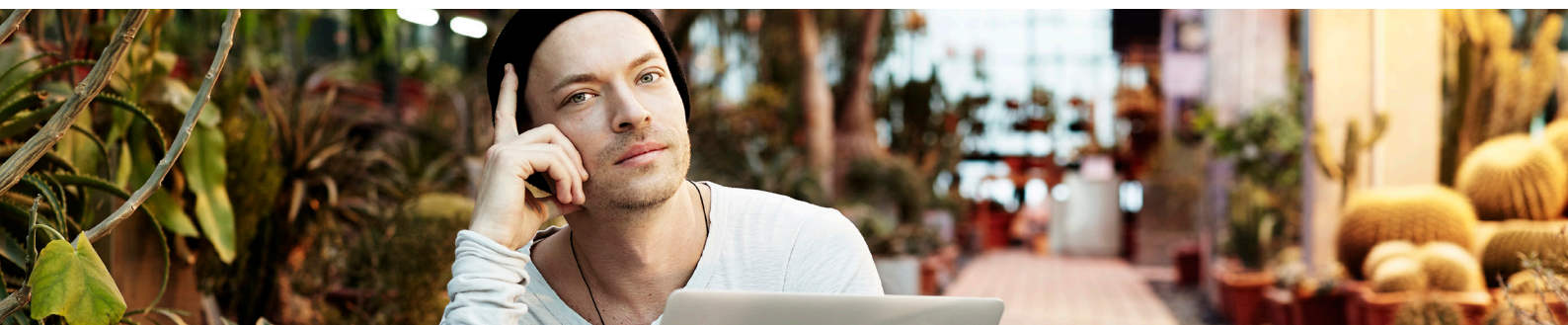
Scholarships are available for women at all stages of their career to participate in a range of women's only leadership programs run by Women and Leadership Australia. Scholarship applicants can choose from three courses, depending on their previous leadership experience. All courses are delivered using a combination of online and face-to-face learning. Participants will learn skills such as heightened presence and influence, managing team dynamics, driving performance and leading innovation and change. With 20 scholarships available each year, the scholarships fund up to 60 per cent of the cost of participating in the courses.

**More information is available at the Women & Leadership Australia website at [www.wla.edu.au/horticulture.html](http://www.wla.edu.au/horticulture.html)**

## **Hort Leadership Network**

This program will establish a community of like-minded industry leaders who share a common desire to lift the bar for Australia's horticultural sector. Membership is open to people who have participated in a Hort Frontiers Leadership Fund initiative. Other individuals can apply to join the network including recognised industry leaders who have considerable experience and good standing within the industry and agricultural sector more broadly. Members will have access to an exclusive annual national networking event along with other networking activities. The alumni program is managed by Hort Innovation.

**More information is available by contacting Jane Wightman by email at [jane.wightman@horticulture.com.au](mailto:jane.wightman@horticulture.com.au) or give her a call on 0427 142 046.**





## Masterclass in horticultural business (LP15001)

The Masterclass in horticultural business is the first project of its kind in Australia. It combines the expertise of what is currently ranked the number one university in agriculture and forestry in the world, the Wageningen Research Academy in the Netherlands, with New Zealand's specialist land-based university, Lincoln, as well as the leading Australian horticulture university, the University of Tasmania. The program is open to up to 30 entrants each year and is delivered on line and face to face over nine months. Learning modules include global trends in agriculture and horticulture, international business, innovation, value chains, and governance and risk. Some industries (vegetable, apple and pear, cherry, nursery and summer fruit) have committed levy funding to provide scholarships to growers from their sector. Industry stakeholders wishing to participate can apply for HECS/HELP to assist with the cost of tuition (\$10,000). Interested growers can submit an expression of interest for the 2019 mid-year or 2020 year intake by contacting the University of Tasmania.

More information is available at the UTAS website at [www.utas.edu.au/land-food/masterclass-in-horticultural-business](http://www.utas.edu.au/land-food/masterclass-in-horticultural-business)



## Attracting new entrants into Australian horticulture (LP15006)

Final year university students from any discipline are eligible to receive an \$8,000 scholarship to undertake an internship within a host business from the horticultural sector. On completion of their degree, the host business is encouraged to employ the graduate, with Hort Innovation co-investing in the first year's salary plus participation in a leadership program delivered by Rural Leadership Foundation.

More information is available at the Gradlink Program website at [www.gradlinkprogram.com.au/hort-innovation-internship-program/](http://www.gradlinkprogram.com.au/hort-innovation-internship-program/)



**Hort  
Innovation**

Find out more about the Hort Frontiers Leadership Fund:

[hortfrontiers.com.au](http://hortfrontiers.com.au)



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**Andrew Doecke**  
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# 2019 Events

## OCTOBER

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

### October

- 5-9** Anuga, Cologne
- 30** ABA Annual General Meeting, Loxton
- 30-31** Australian Almonds Research & Development Forum, Loxton


## NOVEMBER

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

### November

- 12** ABA Production Committee Meeting, Loxton  
ABA Almond Centre of Excellence Committee Meeting, Loxton
- 18** ABA Market Development Committee Meeting, Adelaide
- 19** ABA Board Meeting, Adelaide  
ABA Plant Improvement Committee Meeting, Adelaide
- 22** Hort Innovation Annual General Meeting, Sydney





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# Lemon syrup cake

## *with almond meal*

Servings: 10

Prep time: 40 minutes Cook time: 50 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

- 155g (1 1/2 cups almond meal)
- 70g (1/2 cup) gluten-free cornflour
- 75g (1/3 cup) raw sugar
- 35g (1/3 cup) desiccated coconut
- 40g (1/4 cup) millet flour
- 40g (1/4 cup) sesame seeds
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 110g (1/2 cup) coconut oil, melted
- 3 eggs
- 1 lemon, rind finely grated, juiced
- 2 tsp vanilla essence
- Large pepitas, to decorate
- Flaked almonds, to decorate
- 3-4 finger limes, pearls removed, reserved, to decorate (optional)
- Edible flower petals, to decorate (optional)
- Coconut yoghurt, to serve (optional)

### Syrup

- 2 tbs raw sugar
- 60mL (1/4 cup) fresh lemon juice

### METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 170C/150C fan forced. Grease and line the base and side of a deep, round 20cm (base measurement) cake pan with baking paper.
2. Place the almond meal, cornflour, sugar, coconut, millet flour, sesame seeds and baking powder in a large bowl. Make a well in the centre. Add coconut oil, eggs, lemon rind, 60ml (1/4 cup) lemon juice, vanilla and 60ml (1/4 cup) water. Stir with a large metal spoon until just combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan. Smooth the surface. Use the pepitas and almonds to decorate the top of the cake in floral patterns. Bake cake for 40-45 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool in pan for 10-15 minutes, then turn onto a wire rack set over a baking tray.
3. For the syrup, place sugar, lemon juice and 80ml (1/3 cup) water in a small pan. Stir over low heat until sugar dissolves. Increase heat and simmer for 3-5 minutes or until the syrup thickens slightly.
4. Pour the syrup over the warm cake. Decorate with lime pearls and flower petals, if using. Serve with coconut yoghurt, if you like.

Recipe and image source: [Taste.com.au](https://www.taste.com.au)

