

THE USE OF MICRO NUTRIENT ELEMENTS IN SUBTROPICAL CROPS

Dr J G K Coetzee
CENTRAL ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES

SUMMARY

Micronutrients contribute towards the production of quality subtropical fruits. To prevent over supply and maintain optimal levels of the six micronutrients within the trees, existing diagnostic methods like leaf analysis, need to be applied annually.

Soil applications, fertigation and foliar sprays can be utilised to increase or maintain the micronutrient status of trees. However, the absorption of micronutrients by subtropical crops is restricted by many factors like inherent plant properties, soil and climatic conditions.

To supply micronutrients effectively, one needs to evaluate the reasons and conditions causing the deficiency or short supply before the most suitable method of application and formulation of the nutrient are selected.

All the different methods to apply the micronutrients have limitations. Ensure that the basic requirements of the selected method are being satisfied during the actual application.

When selecting the formulation, use benchmarking to ensure that the product has a potential to supply the specific nutrient to the plant.