

# How the Australian Persimmon Industry is Becoming More Internationally Competitive.

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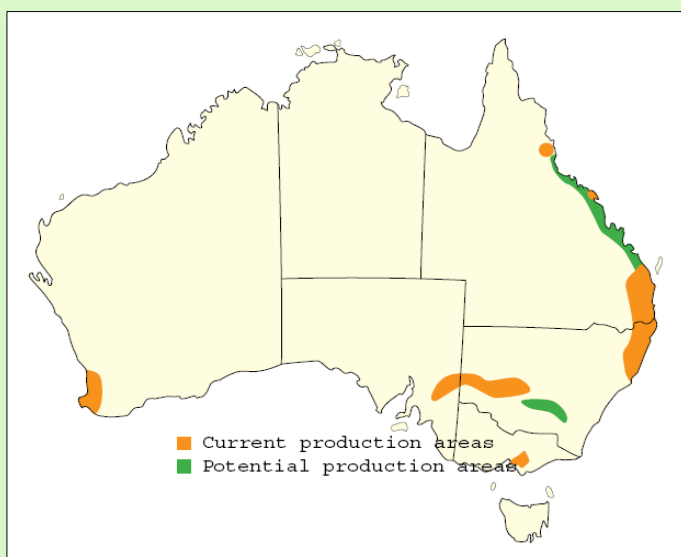
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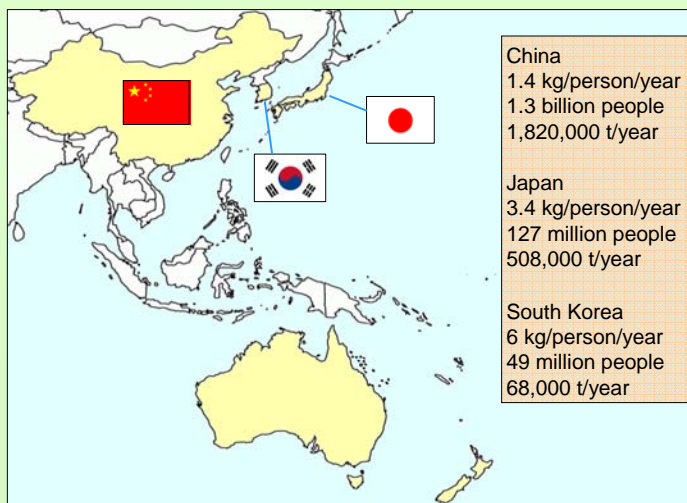
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Persimmon is a major fruit crop in Asia, with around 2.6 million tonnes being produced each year. It is also one of the world's fastest growing food crops at 5.76% per year. The majority of Persimmon production and consumption is in Asia, however they can only satisfy their own Persimmon demand between October and January.

Australian production is low (~2,500 tonnes/year, <0.1% of world production) but there is a very high export potential to Asia in March-July, during the northern hemisphere off-season. Queensland produces about 50% of Australia's Persimmons.



Current and potential Persimmon production areas in Australia; set to expand with new rootstocks in development (map from Collins, 1997).



Persimmon consumption rates, populations, and total persimmon consumption for China, Japan and South Korea. Persimmon consumption in these countries equals 92% of world production.

New Zealand is the only other major Persimmon producer in the southern hemisphere exporting to Asia. Their main production is in July and August, whereas Australian Persimmon production occurs between March and July.

Australia's persimmons' major competitive advantages over New Zealand's fruit are their very high sugar levels and eating quality. Australia, however, needs to considerably improve fruit quality, storage and handling methods to align with New Zealand's high fruit quality.

Queensland's DPI&F are conducting research into improving Australia's Persimmon quality in order to capture a larger export market in Asia.

To strengthen international competitiveness, the Australian Persimmon Industry is funding a wide range of research and development projects:

- Reducing abnormal fruit softening
- Improving tree architecture and other techniques for better light interception and higher fruit quality
- Developing semi-dwarfing, salt-tolerant and drought-tolerant rootstocks to expand Australia's potential production area for Persimmon
- Extending post-harvest storage life with modified Atmosphere (MA) bags and ethylene inhibitors, such as 1-Methylcyclopropene (1-MCP)
- Developing new maturity indices using Near Infra-Red Spectroscopy (NIRS)
- Fruit-fly disinfestation via irradiation treatment
- Managing clearwing moth



Rootstocks in testing



Salt and drought tolerance



Modified atmosphere bags



New tree training systems



Reflective mulch



Clearwing moth