

## OAK VALLEY OoF GRAEME KRIGE & NEVILLE VAN BUUREN

What was the objective of this OoF? Producing Granny Smith apples in the EGW in the conventional way is a massive challenge, mostly due to high levels of sunburn and a very low tolerance for this defect. Currently the most effective way to alleviate sunburn is to use shade netting. However, the use of shade net is coupled with several challenges; especially when using current industry standard, more vigorous rootstocks. Hence the objective of this orchard was to assess whether Granny Smith could be produced more profitably on new generation, more precocious rootstocks under shade nets in the EGW.

How is progress in this orchard block to-date? The orchard is in its fifth leaf, although it would be more useful to look at it from a fourth leaf perspective as we planted very small trees. We had a warmer than normal winter and at the start of the current season we struggled with delayed foliation and poor budbreak. Yet, we predict a fair crop. We are expecting 50-60 tons per hectare.

### Lessons learnt:

- Neither shade nets, nor new rootstocks are 'silver bullet' or 'fix-it-all'
- G222 is a viable option for Granny Smith under nets as far as vigour and precocity is concerned
- With more dwarfing rootstocks you have to be diligent about supporting the tree. Not only for carrying the crop, but also to protect the graft union from snapping off.



Watch video on YouTube:  
<http://bit.ly/2o8X3Rn>

*\*Performance data of each orchard will be presented in a future edition of the SAFJ*