

# Subtrop's bursary scheme bears fruit

**Derek Donkin**  
SUBTROP

Subtrop's bursary scheme, the Lindsay Milne Bursary, was set up a decade ago as a joint project between the Avocado, Litchi and Macadamia Growers' Associations to ensure a continual flow of young agriculture graduates into the subtropical industries.

Dr Lindsay Milne, a former head of Merensky Technological Services and Technical Director of SAAGA, was passionate about the subtropical industries and set up the original Subtropical Fruit Growers' Association to promote

cooperation between the Avocado, Litchi, Mango and Macadamia Growers' Associations, prior to the formation of Subtrop in 2006. The bursary scheme was launched and named after him shortly after his death as a result of a car accident.

The Lindsay Milne bursary is usually awarded to third and fourth year students studying towards a BSc (Agric) degree in horticultural science or a related field. There are usually two students funded at any one time. On completion of their studies, bursary recipients are required to work back the number of years that they received

the bursary if there is a suitable position open at Subtrop at the time.

Barry Christie, who is currently Subtrop's Extensionist / Area Coordinator in the Mpumalanga region, was a recipient of the bursary, as were Rory Nunes and Jacques Crous who previously worked for Subtrop. Post harvest researcher, Dr Rob Blakey, was also a bursary recipient. He is employed by Westfalia Technological Services and involved in a number of SAAGA funded research projects. Sietske van Tol, who was awarded the bursary during her undergraduate studies, has recently taken up a position with Westfalia. **ST**



**Nomvuyo Matlala**

## New extensionist for emerging growers

**Gerhard Nortjé**  
SUBTROP

Nomvuyo Matlala joined Subtrop on the 15th of January 2014 to fill the position of Emerging Grower Extensionist. She holds a BInstAgrar degree in food production and processing from the University of Pretoria. Nomvuyo is a very sociable, creative and capable person and well suited for this position. She will be responsible for the Subtrop Emerging Farmers Study Groups in the Vhembe region and coordinate the Government Extension Training. She will also work on a project basis and serve as coordinator for projects such as the Vhembe Macadamia Farmer Development Project. Subtrop welcomes Nomvuyo as part of the team. **ST**

## Research projects at universities: Not just about science

**Derek Donkin**  
SUBTROP

SAAGA, SALGA, SAMGA and SAMAC have been funding research projects at universities since the mid-1970s. These research projects have contributed to knowledge from nursery tree production to Phytophthora management to post harvest handling and just about everything in between.

However, the value of university research projects lies only partially in the research results obtained. Most of these projects involve students in their final year or doing post graduate research, many of whom are employed in the industry on completion of their studies. People currently employed in the avocado industry that were involved in SAAGA research projects as students, include researchers Drs Zelda van Rooyen and Rob Blakey. Others working in technical and managerial positions are Zac Bard, Theo Bekker, André Lutge, Richard Kock and Derek Donkin.

Funding of university research projects also enables the industry to support

academics that are passionate about subtropical crops and whose work has been essential in generating knowledge essential for profitable commercial production. Professors Ballie Kotzé, Peter Allan, Nigel Wolstenholme, Hannes Robbertse, Lise Korsten and John Bower are examples of those who have promoted research and inspired students to enter our industry. Nino Burelli and Louis Vorster are examples of those that were initially employed in the industry due to the influence of their university professors.

University research projects are not just about finding solutions to production and post harvest problems; they are also about developing new talent to take the industry into the future. **ST**

