Free internet based grower tools

Andrew Hodson
HortPlus NZ Ltd
Email: Andrew@hortplus.com

The internet is a great resource for growers to use. Some tools you have to pay for but a lot of very useful things are free. They are worth a look to enhance vineyard management and help with complex task like site selection and frost risk assessment.

Access to national weather data that covers a long period can be accessed from here:

http://cliflo.niwa.cri.nz/

This site can be used for site assessment, long term frost trends, growing degree days and general weather information. Well worth a look. This site can be a bit confusing but stick with it. It's well worth the effort. One of the problems with this site is the weather station locations. Only a few are in major horticultural area. This site:

http://www.hortnet.co.nz/weather-data.htm

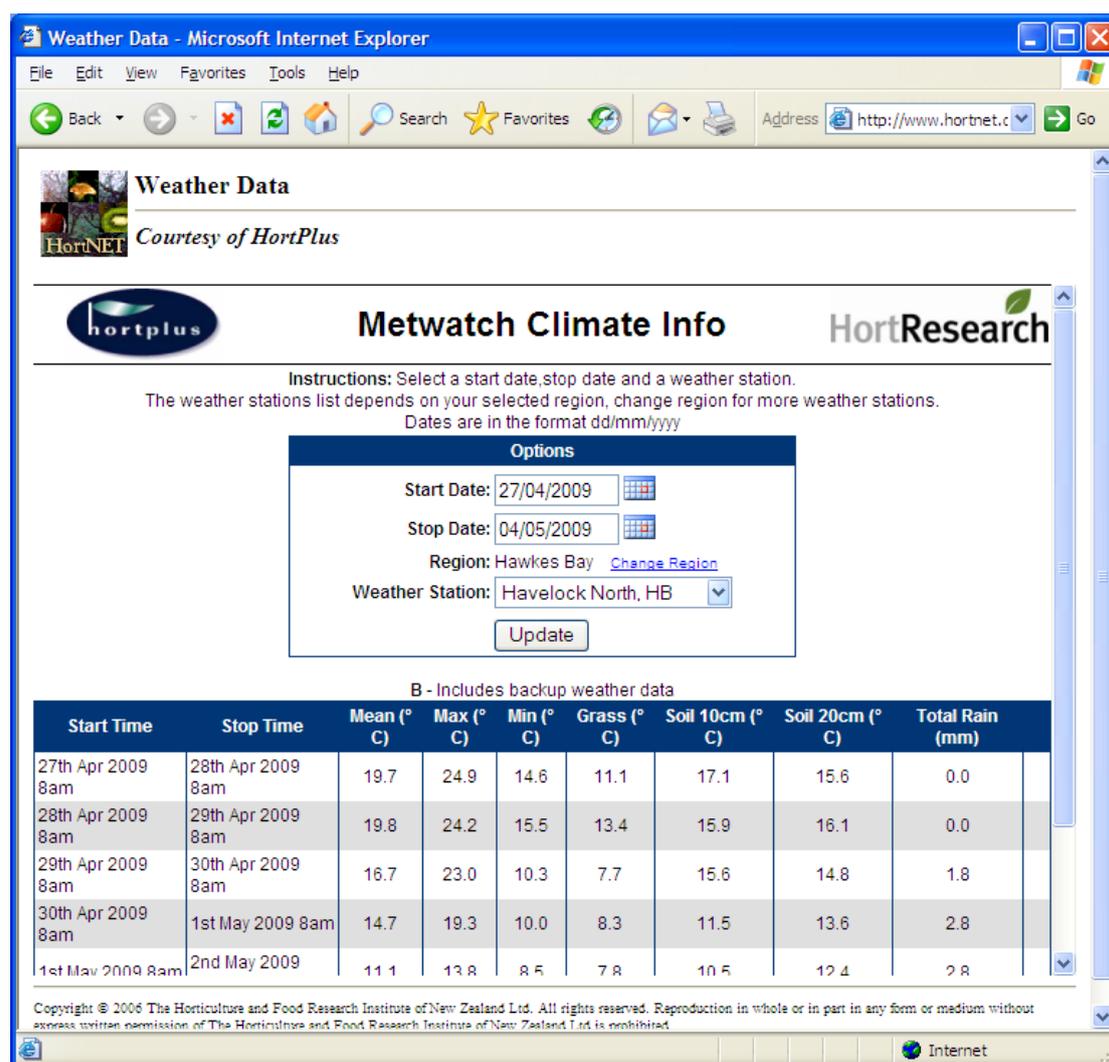should fill any gaps. A screen shot of the site is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The history is reduced but all of the stations are in horticultural major areas including Hawkes Bay and Marlborough. A map of what is available can be found here:

http://www.hortplusgis.com/spraywatch2/weatherstations/

The stars indicate privately owned automated weather stations and the circles are NIWA, government owned sites. On the bottom left you can see what is available in your region by selecting your choice them clicking Go. To monitor frost conditions on your place look here:

http://hortplus.com/Brochure/TempLog/TempLog.htm

These loggers are small, inexpensive and will last a long time. Ideal for frost monitoring on your property.

Sustainable Wine Growers also have a link to this data:

http://www.hortplus2.com/swnz/climate/index.php

Just looking at the log of use it is very popular with growers. Accessed over 8,000 times.

Other weather data includes an irrigation site:

http://cropirlog.co.nz/

From here you can download free PET data. Pretty soon this site will also have software to help you manage irrigation on your vineyard. Wise use of water is becoming a bigger issue in New Zealand. Just be thankful you don't live in Australia.

A free application to store applied sprays and pest monitoring records can be found here:

http://www.spraylog.hortplus2.com/

All grape growers should be familiar with this as it is compulsory to record spray records for the Sustainable Wine Growing system. A new feature for this year will be a property map and a satellite photo of your area. Also another tool should be available for managing fertiliser use. An enhanced version for dealing with multiple properties and for doing withholding period calculations is available for purchase from HortPlus. The Sustainable Wine Growing people use this software to process your spray records. Just email HortPlus at sales@hortplus.com for more information.

A related site to develop an annual spray plan can be found here :

 http://www.hortplus2.com/sprayplan/

This site is also part of the Sustainable Wine Growing system. This site includes national GIS property data and a spray drift weather forecast updated 4 times per day. Both SprayLog and SprayPlan Manager have up to date agrichemical information. Additional product properties can be found here:

 http://www.hortplus2.com/tools/index.php?pageID=products

If you need to get Material Safety Data Sheets, try this site:

http://msds.co.nz/

or you can try going to the chemical wholesaler web site. Below I have listed a few.

http://www.zelam.com/
http://www.nufarm.co.nz/NZ/Home
http://www.basf.com/group/corporate/en/
http://www.basf.com/group/corporate/en/

They usually have a label, a material safety datasheet (MSDS or SDS) and a haznote file available. A haznote is just a condensed MSDS. Well worth keeping on record.

Hopefully you will find these sites of use. It is by no means all that is available. You probably have your own favourites. Maybe you can add one or two of the sites listed above to your site collection. If you have any questions, feel free to send me an email. My address is shown at the start.