

The F Word!

As we head into the cold season I thought it would be interesting to have a look at the past few years slide into winter, including the arrival of the first frosts of the year. There it is, frost, the dreaded F word!

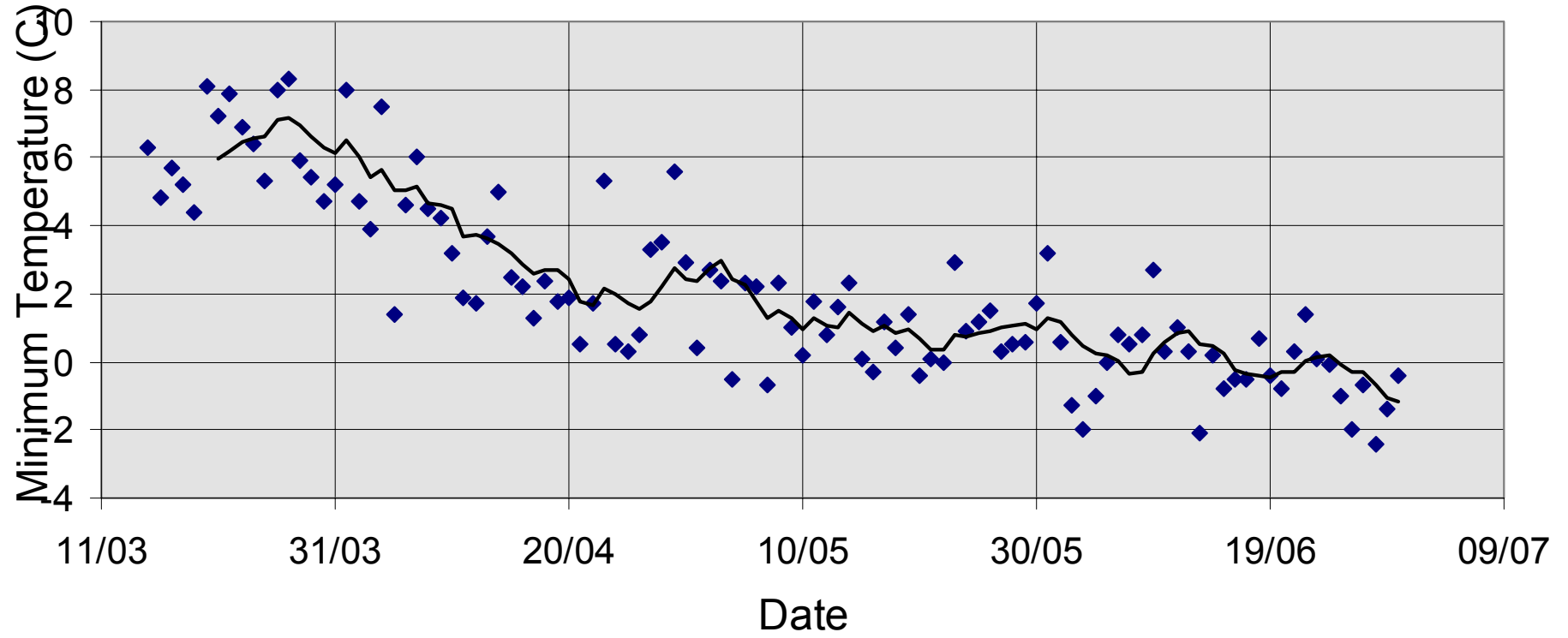
Weather station records for the period mid-March to end of June were examined for the years 1996-1999. The HortPlus MetWatch software package was used to provide summaries of minimum daily temperature for each day during the period, with the daily temperature summaries being pasted into Excel from MetWatch using the MetWatch copy feature. In Excel, the lowest of the minimum temperatures for each day across the years was recorded and graphed with a 7-day moving average trend line inserted to give an indication of the trends in minimum temperature during the early winter in Gisborne, Hawkes Bay and Nelson.

The results are very much as you would expect. Plummeting minimum temperatures with the shorter days and lower sun angles, and a North - South trend of decreasing minimum temperature. While this format of presentation does not lend itself well to assessing inter-seasonal difference, there are some indications - intriguingly I thought - that Gisborne's climate shows more variation year to year than Nelson's.

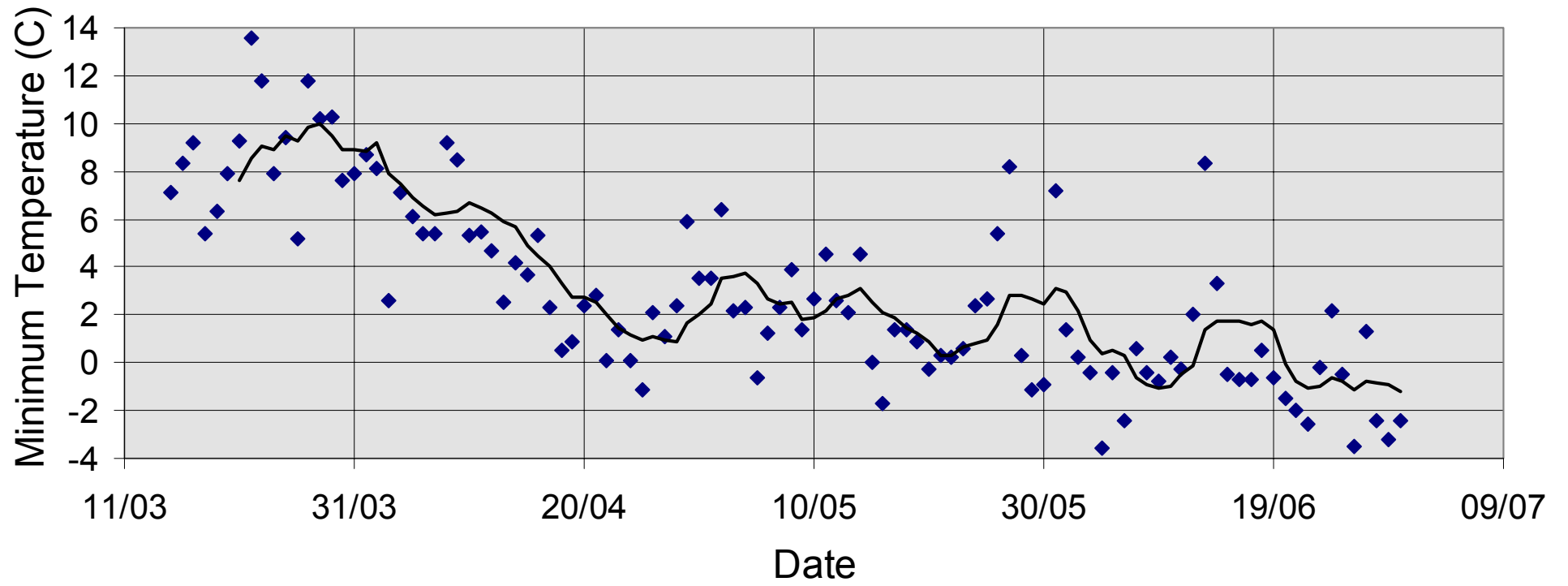
End of April beginning of May fairly consistently sees the beginning of the winter frosts in Hawkes Bay and Nelson... whose population may look with a bit of envy on the warmer mornings of Gisborne - mind you, where I grew up in Canada we awoke to -40°C on many mornings... so winters in New Zealand don't look so bad!

The information provided here is for entertainment only. For more information on HortPlus MetWatch software and weather station access you can call 0800 HORTPLUS (0800 438 467); or check the web site at www.hortplus.com; or email me at trevor.atkins@hortplus.com

Nelson



Hawkes Bay



Gisborne

