

Weather Sense: Rain Roundup
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A season of extremes in rainfall - drought in some parts and orchardists swimming to the spray shed in others! This month I used the weather summary features of HortPlus™ MetWatch to summarise rainfall around the country, and to compare how this season's rainfall compared with last season.

In Figure 1 we see the wide range of monthly rainfall totals falling around the country. The much wetter North Island season is quite evident, and you can almost smell the smoke from the burning hills in the Marlborough area.

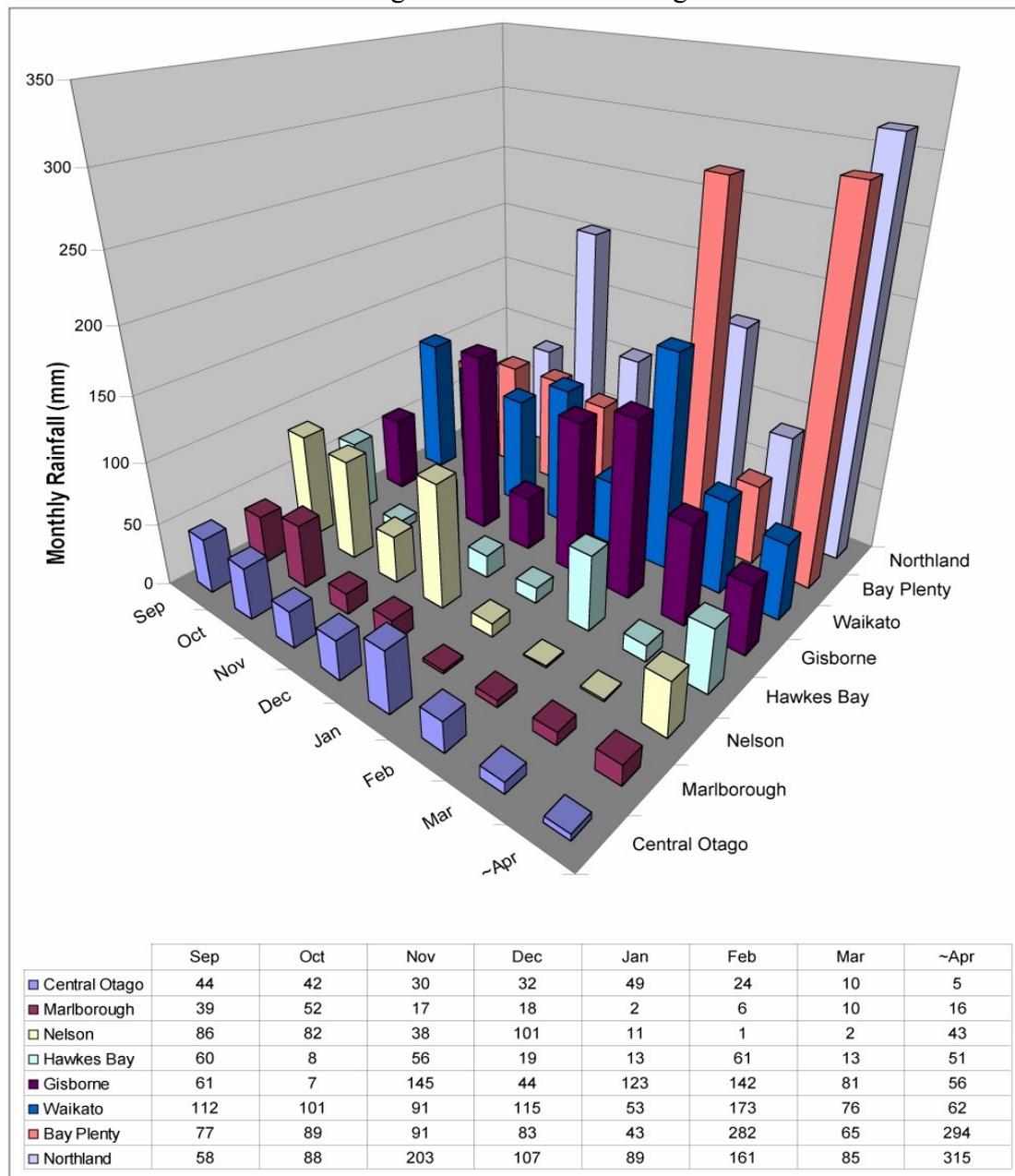


Figure 1. Monthly rainfall throughout New Zealand during the 2000-2001 growing season. Note that April totals are for only the first half of the month.

Comparing this season with last season shows some interesting differences (see Figure 2). In most places, November was drier than last season. This was also the time of cooler temperatures this season if you remember back to last month's Weather Sense so it is likely the weather was dominated by anti-cyclones through that period this season.

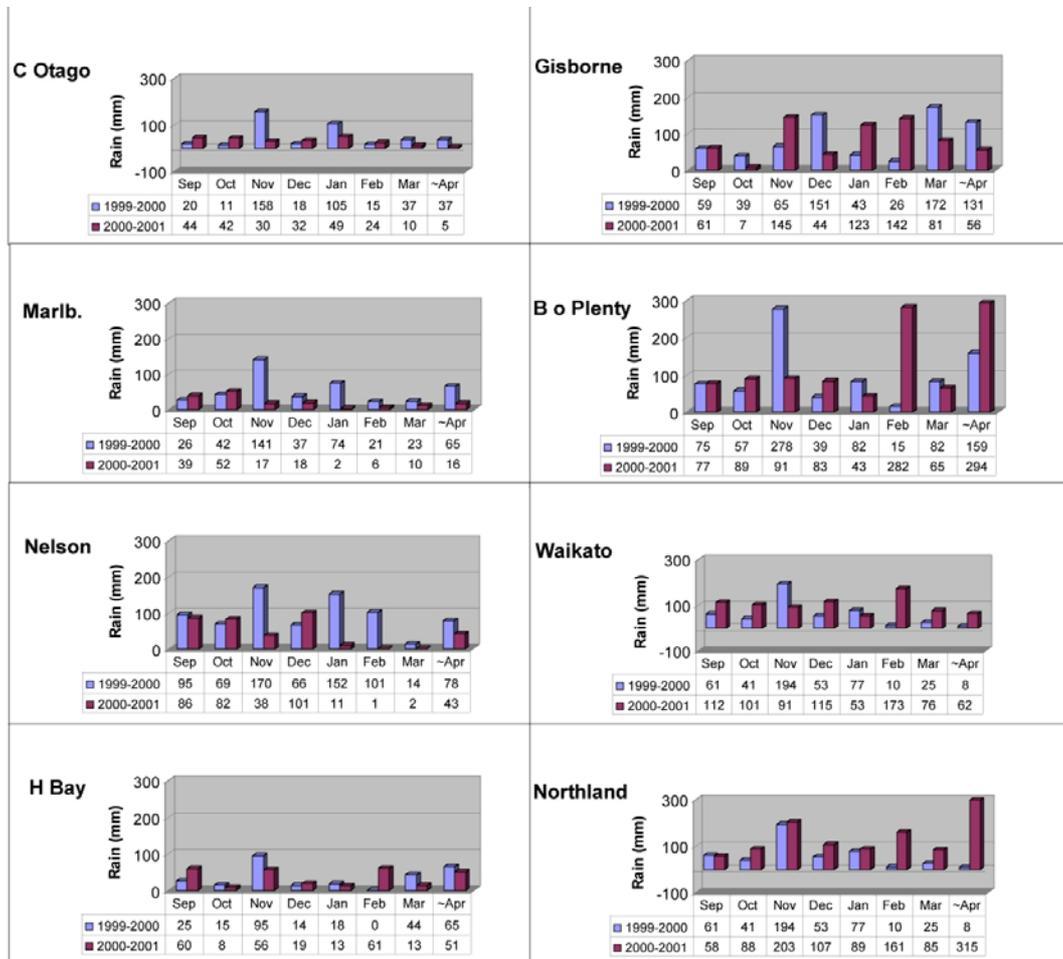


Figure 2. Between year comparison of monthly rainfall totals around the country. Note that April totals are for only the first half of the month.

The North Island suffered a wet summer in most places other than Hawkes Bay which was relatively dry other than during February. Disease control was a major problem in these areas due to the very wet conditions. Cold spring and a wet summer in many areas... a season to remember or a season to forget?!

It won't be long before we are turning our minds to winter chilling again. HortPlus will be deploying some of our cost-effective Quick Measure Temperature Loggers to provide regional winter chill information as a service to the industry. This information will be made available through Weather Sense and on our web site at www.hortplus.com in the freebies area, but if you are serious about winter chill monitoring, now is the time to think about installing temperature loggers in key areas of your orchard. You can find out more about some of the options for monitoring temperatures on your orchard on our web site at www.hortplus.com.