

Weather Sense: Perceptions and Reality
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An interesting end to the growing season this year. Put up your hand if you think that the past couple of months have been markedly warmer than previous autumns. If you have your hand in the air you will be in agreement with most people that I quizzed on this. You will also be looking a bit silly sitting in a room by yourself with your arm waving about!

The interesting thing is that if we graph heat accumulation (illustrated in the accompanying figures as Growing Degree Days with base temperature of 10°C) this autumn has not been anything particularly unusual. In fact, if it were not for a quite warm fortnight in mid-May the numbers would be showing a coolish autumn!

The moral here if there is one, is that when it comes to weather and climate, it is very difficult for people to make subjective comparisons between seasons. You really need to collect hard data if you want to make meaningful comparisons.

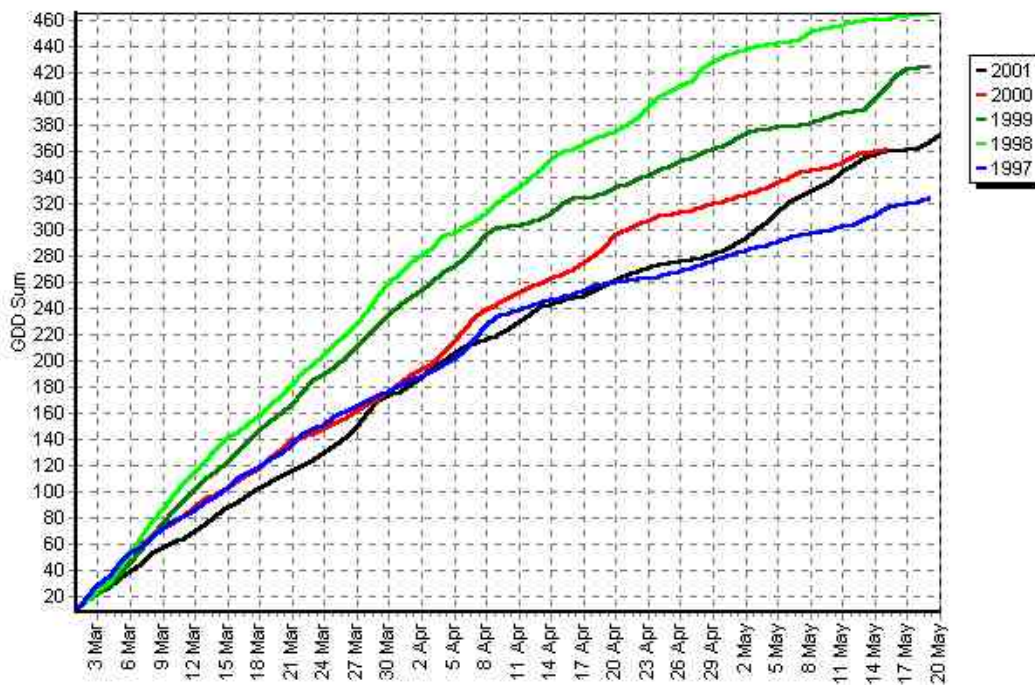


Figure 1. Autumn heat accumulation: Hawkes Bay

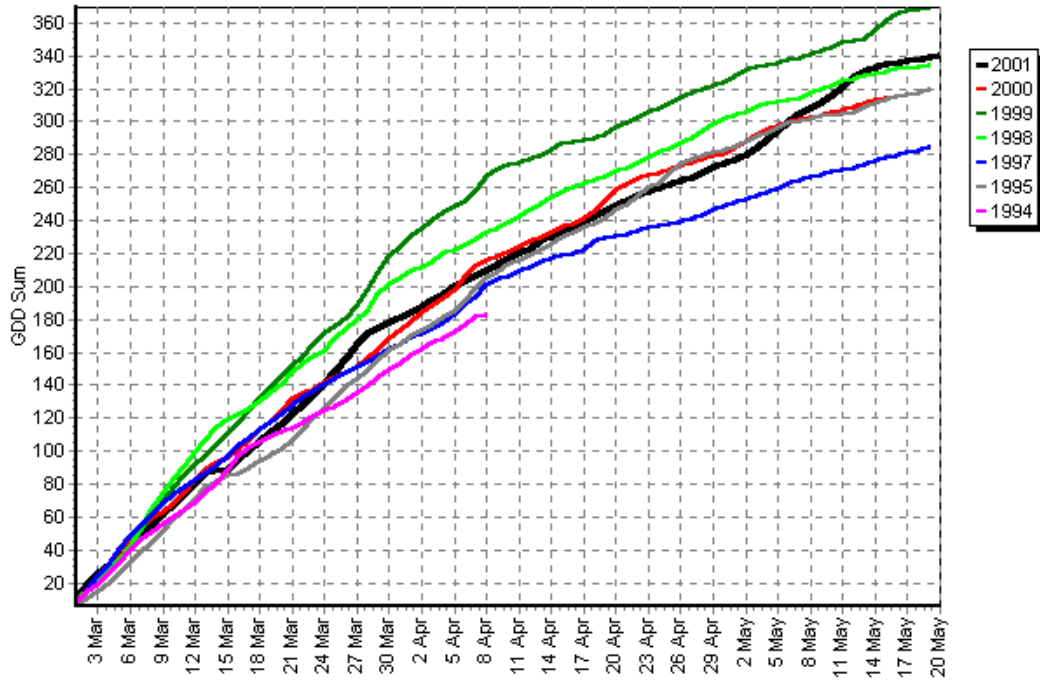


Figure 2. Autumn heat accumulation: Nelson