

Soil Moisture Recharge

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Winter rainfall plays an important part in replenishing the water throughout the soil profile on your orchard. My old soil profs would be turning in my graves with this analogy, but think of your soils as a big sponge. Your soils are fully recharged when water begins dripping out the bottom of the sponge when you pour more on. If you don't have enough winter rainfall, you don't get your sponge/reservoir topped up.

This month we use the weather summary features of HortPlus MetWatch to look at winter rainfall around the country over the past few years.

Table 1. Total rainfall by region for period June to October

	Central Otago	Marlborough	Nelson	Hawkes Bay	Gisborne	Waikato
1999	100	288	691	202	323	441
2000	135	246	609	243	223	
2001	89	286	538	313	425	356

Figure 1. Total rainfall by region for period June to October

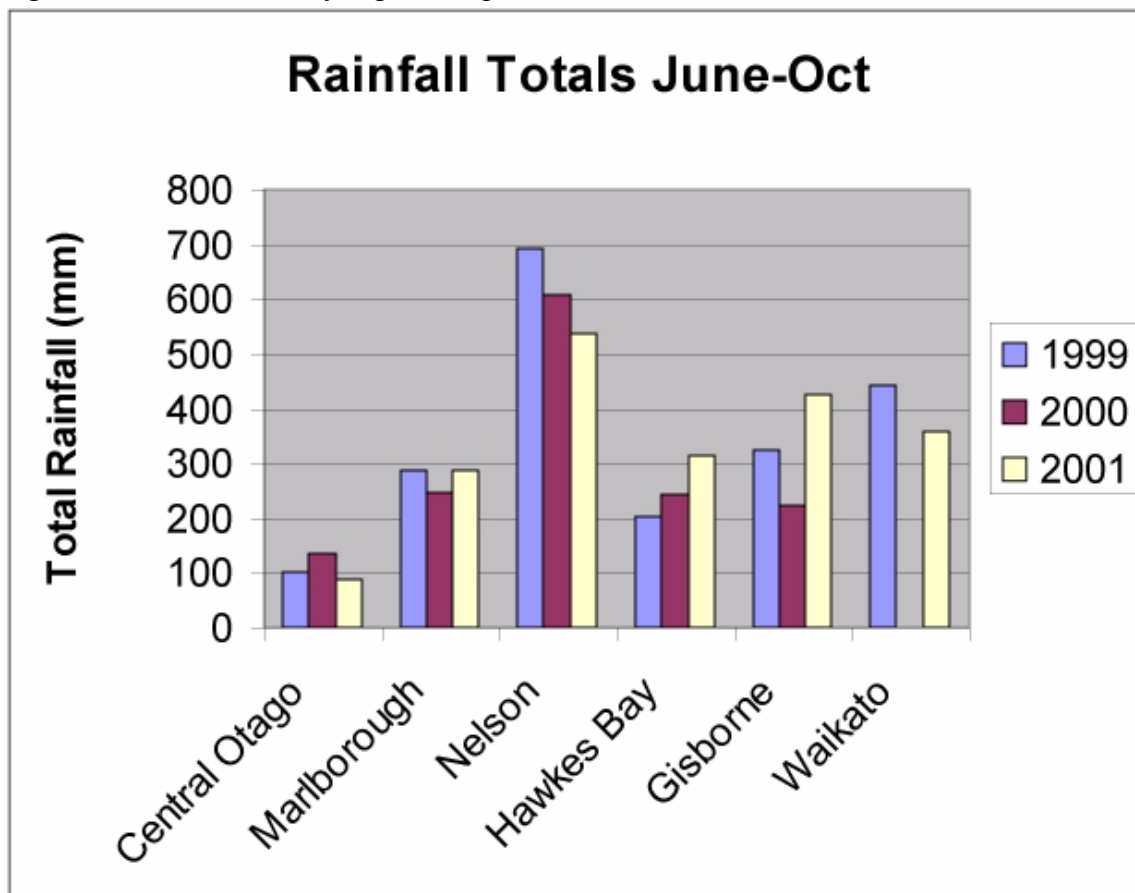
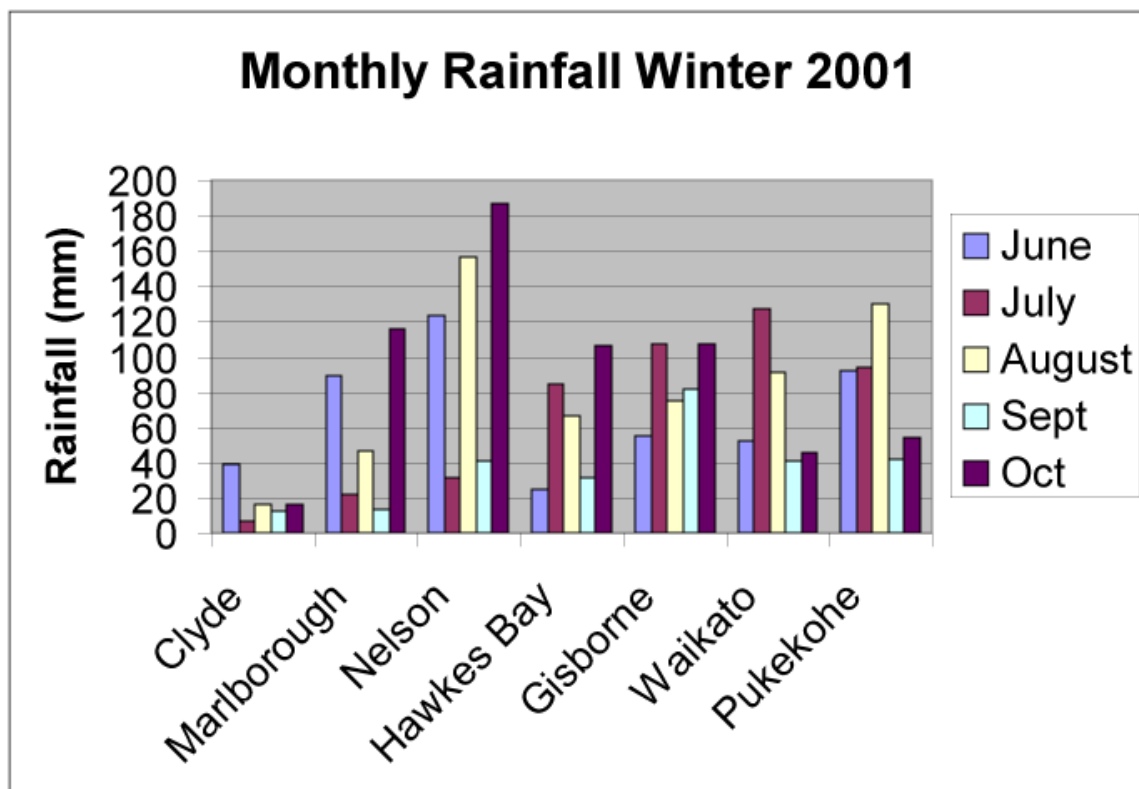


Table 2. Monthly rainfall totals (mm) for winter 2001.

	Clyde	Marlborough	Nelson	Hawkes Bay	Gisborne	Waikato	Pukekohe
June	38.6	88.9	122.8	24.9	55.2	52.4	92
July	6.3	21.6	31.4	83.9	107.4	127.2	93.7
August	15.7	46.9	156.6	66.7	74.6	90.9	129.9
Sept	12.6	13.1	40.6	31.4	81.3	40.3	41.4
Oct	15.7	115.5	186.4	106.2	106.8	45.5	54.3
Total	88.9	286	537.8	313.1	425.3	356.3	411.3

Figure 2. Monthly rainfall winter 2001



While most areas have received similar rainfall totals this winter as compared with the last few winters, the monthly distribution is markedly different in some area. Nelson is a good example of this with very high and very low monthly totals. No wonder some of our Nelson clients have mentioned something about web feet!

What it all means is very dependant on your individual soil types, but overall you should be looking at about the same conditions going into this summer as in the previous couple of years in most areas.