

This years weather so far

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In a recent article titled “What to Expect This Year” I mentioned that HortPlus would be developing a tool to look at the current season and compare it to previous years. It is based on about 8 years of data and the results of that tool are shown in Figure 1. This figure shows how far we are above or below average temperatures. So for example, January in Kerikeri was 0.5 °C warmer than average. The figure shows some interesting trends. May 2008 was a very cold month. On average we would expect the regional temperature variation to be plus or minus 1 °C in 2 out of 3 years and plus or minus 2 °C in 19 out of 20 years. Therefore to be that far below normal in May is a 1 in 20 year event. So far November has been quite cool around the country except in Kerikeri and Clyde.

Station	Month										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Kerikeri Research C.	0.5	0.0	1.2	1.1	-1.5	1.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	-0.3	0.1
Pukekohe Res. Stn	1.7	0.1	1.2	1.0	-1.5	0.9	0.4	-0.2	0.4	0.3	-0.9
Rukuhia, Waikato	1.6	0.2	1.2	1.3	-2.4	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.2	-0.5
Matawhero-Awapuni, Gisborne	-0.1	-0.4	0.1	1.0	-2.9	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.1	-0.5
Havelock North, HB	-0.2	-0.5	0.5	1.0	-2.2	-0.8	0.8	0.3	-0.2	0.3	-0.6
Riwaka Res Station	1.6	0.0	0.9	1.0	-2.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.3	-1.0
Marlborough Res.Cntr	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.5	-3.2	0.6	-0.5	-0.4	0.1	0.2	-0.6
Lincoln Univ., Cant.	0.7	-0.1	0.7	0.7	-2.6	0.9	0.2	-1.3	0.8	0.1	0.2
Clyde, Central Otago	1.8	0.9	0.6	-0.6	-3.1	0.9	-1.0	-0.3	1.3	0.5	0.5

Figure 1

Figure 2 shows a similar analysis for rainfall. The amount falling is expressed as the % of normal rainfall. We can see that April was a wet month for everyone except Lincoln in Canterbury. November has been quite dry so far although that may change with a heavy downpour forecast late in the month.

Station	Month										
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Kerikeri Research C.	84	147	71	297	86	74	166	136	85	52	10
Pukekohe Res. Stn	47	42	111	112	116	105	142	263	56	80	40
Rukuhia, Waikato	15	71	28	737	87	182	222	200	89	148	29
Matawhero-Awapuni, Gisborne	90	97	98	200	219	55	74	41	20	49	14
Havelock North, HB	48	42	81	247	207	86	142	58	66	68	38
Riwaka Res Station	121	80	131	114	9	73	200	215	187	56	73
Marlborough Res.Cntr	37	54	142	201	46	60	218	320	226	109	74
Lincoln Univ., Cant.	74	389	24	3	75	178	280	178	173	75	31
Clyde, Central Otago	88	68	166	198	122	39	130	71	187	51	21

Figure 2

In terms of what the season will bring, its anybody's guess. We have looked at a few seasonal forecasts and they all seem to say the same thing. The southern oscillation is in a neutral phase so we have no guide to go by. Therefore it is unclear what will happen.

So what are we left with? A fairly average season, with a cool May and slightly cooler November. Rainfall has been steady with a wet April but starting to dry out now. Perhaps good winter chilling and moist soil to start the season. The future is hard to guess so our suggestion is to do what you did last year if that worked and continue to keep a weather eye on things. The list of websites below should help you with your decisions.

Climate Outlook

http://www.niwa.cri.nz/ncc/seasonal_climate_outlook

<http://www.metservice.net.nz/default/index.php?ckey=225696>

National Rain radar

<http://www.metservice.co.nz/default/index.php?alias=akradar>

Weather Station map

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

Current Weather Conditions

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

<http://hortplus2.com/> [for Metwatch Online subscribers or email us for a free trial]

<http://cliflo.niwa.co.nz/>

Irrigation Information

<http://cropirlog.co.nz/>

<http://cliflo.niwa.co.nz/>

Satellite Images of NZ

<http://www.metvuw.com/satellite/>

<http://www.metservice.co.nz/default/index.php?alias=irsatellite>

<http://satellite.landcareresearch.co.nz/noaa/>