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THE NEW ESO WEED IDENTIFICATION PROBLEM SOLVER

Dr John Lapham

Once the first rains fall, numerous types of weeds emerge and grow amongst crops. Obviously it is critical to remove these weeds before they start competing seriously with the crop for nutrients and water; the longer they are left the more they will affect the growth and final yield of the crop. If they are controlled by hand-weeding, it needs to be repeated several times to keep the field clean of weeds.

It is at this stage that farmers often notice that some weeds are most persistent and more difficult to control. This may be because of the local climate, the local soils, the crop rotations and various other reasons. Whatever the cause, a special effort has to be made to control these weeds. They could be grass-weeds, broadleaved weeds or sedges; the **Weed Identification tool** (under **Problem Solvers, Crop Health** side bar) helps farmers identify the problem weed and provides information on its growth habit and reproduction. These characteristics are the

reason for its success as a weed in crops. Once the weed is identified the most appropriate cultural practices can be adopted for its control, and herbicides registered for use in the specific crop, can be applied. The **weed identification tool** provides this information on best cultural control practices and registered herbicides for use in the crop.

When using the tool the **first step** is to select the group of weeds within which the problem weed falls. That is, "is it a **grass weed, broadleaved weed, sedge** or a **Commelina species?**" (Commelina species have been separated from the other larger categories of weeds because they appear to be broadleaved weeds but are monocots; that is, they are more closely related to grasses and will be controlled by different herbicides). Within each group, weeds have obvious growth habits such as erect-growing, flat-growing or growing as creepers.

The **second step** is to select one of these categories. All the individual weed species of this type will then be displayed.

Finally the problem weed can be identified from its image and selected. Information on its growth, reproduction and distribution is then shown. In the **example** an upright broadleaved weed, common thornapple has been selected.

At the end of the displayed information, details on control of the weed can be accessed by clicking on the relevant icon.



Dr John Lapham

Slender day flower

Common Name: Slender day flower
Afrikaans Name: Blousselblommetjie
Scientific Name: *Commelina erecta*



Mature plant Flower

Description
This is an erect or sprawling perennial succulent plant that is a member of the monocots. It roots readily from the nodes and can spread in this manner. The flowers are dark blue. It is found mainly on the sandy coastal soils as well as in wet habitats. This species is not as common as *Commelina benghalensis* as a crop weed.

Reproduction
Can reproduce by rhizomes as well as seed.

Distribution
Found in summer rainfall areas in southern Africa.

[Click here](#) to view the herbicides recommended for the control of Slender day flower in some field crops.

For information on the registered herbicides in vegetable crops, for example, click on the **underscored passage**. A list of vegetable crops will appear and then select the crop of interest. All herbicides registered for the control of the specific weed in that crop, will be displayed together with the recommended times of application.



TIPS AND TOOLS FOR ADVISORS

Matsunke Mafane

Culture and Extension Officers

Culture is defined as beliefs, traditions and habits distinguishing one group from another. Language, religion, appearance and general behaviour are often strongly influenced by culture.

Differences may appear insignificant but culture often plays a role in acceptance and trust of "outsiders". Farmers will adopt the advice of the extension officer more easily if he/she acts according to the cultural tradition of the farmers.

"The core and foundation of Extension lies in the needs, constraints, fears, expectations and requirements of farmers"- Dr Roelof de Villiers, (Manstrat's CEO)

HOW TO: Contact the ESO support desk *Thapedi Setshedi*

Those of you who have made Extension Suite Online (ESO) related enquiries to the Manstrat AIS Support Desk before will be familiar with the name **Thapedi Setshedi**. Thapedi mans the Support Desk during working hours and even takes a phone and laptop home during the December break to assist users.

The Manstrat AIS Support Desk, based in the heart of the MAIS Information Centre in Pretoria, is the portal through which all ESO user queries come, via the different mobile, landline and e-mail channels. From here, Thapedi or one of his colleagues either assist users or



forward queries to the relevant specialists and experts, as required.

The Support Desk itself is mainly responsible for the registration of new users as well as handling login queries, forgotten password queries, answering requests about account activations, and day to day technical queries.

Users can get in touch with the ESO Support Desk through the dedicated ESO Support lines: **0860 ESO ESO (376 376)** and **072 382 8278**, or by sending an email to the Support Desk via **"support@esuite.co.za"**.

MONTHLY NATIONAL ESO USER: OCTOBER 2013

ESO utilisation is determined through monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces and by attaching values to Visits, Pages Visited and Duration of Visits; a rating is calculated to establish the National ESO USER of the Month. The monthly national ESO user will receive the

following prizes: First time National ESO User 2013: **4 Gig USB memory stick**, second time National ESO User 2013: **Digital Camera**, third time National ESO User 2013: **Nokia Lumia 520**, fourth time National ESO User 2013: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

Congratulations to **Mr Mark Makashane (Department Eastern Cape Rural Development and Agrarian Reform)**, who is a 2nd time ESO National User for **October 2013**. Mr Makashane will receive a Certificate, and a digital camera.



From left: *Mr Makashane, Mr and Mrs Mdambatya (project beneficiaries) and Mr Vukubi the extension officer at Mdambatya piggery project for monitoring purposes.*

The top National user for the month of October and for a second time this year is **Mr Mark Shoaipane Makashane** from the Eastern Cape Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform – **Congratulations Mark!**

We asked Mark to describe a typical day in his life as an extension officer. He replied that he works in the office most of the time, but that he does go out to oversee production and to monitor the progress of projects. Mark says that he makes use of ESO to assist Extension Officers to develop training material for their farmers. He has been using ESO since 2011 and says that it definitely makes the execution of his duties easier. Whenever he comes across something that he is uncertain about he will confirm it on ESO.

When asked what tips he would give to colleagues regarding ESO and becoming a better extension officer, he answered: *"I would advise Extension Officers to familiarise themselves with ESO because*

farmers usually ask direct questions such as "how many bags of potato seed do I need to plant my 1 ha field?" and normally an Extension officer would not be able to answer the question directly, he/she would be general and talk about many factors, whereas with ESO one is able to answer questions like those directly and with much confidence." With regards to becoming a better extension officer he said: *"Farmers don't trust an Extension Officer who is not sure of his/her content. I would advise Extension Officers to start using ESO to be able to face their farmers with confidence. We must transfer skills and knowledge to our farmers and strive to build sustainability in our projects even when we have left their projects, with the knowledge we get from ESO, they will still be knowledgeable years after we have left them."*

SCORE GROWTH OF TOP USERS

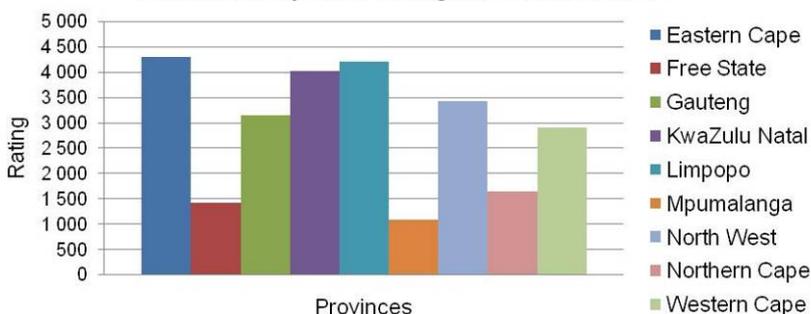
Piet van Zyl

In the previous monthly ESO Newsletter we looked at calculating the ratings of the top users. This month we would like to show you another interesting trend in ESO utilisation statistics. In addition to the names and ratings of the top user from each province, we have, since May 2013, also included the names and ratings of the ten top users nationally, irrespective of their province. This led to the "discovery" of how much the rating scores of the top users have grown over the past two years.

Where a rating of around 3,000 was good enough to win the National ESO Top User Award during 2012 (with one or two exceptions), the user rated tenth nationally in October 2013, had accumulated 2,911 points and the ninth rated user 3,142 points, with a bare 320 points difference between the first four users!

The combined rating score of the top 10 users nationally in January 2012 was 15,880, and 28,361 in October 2013, increasing by 78.5%! Is that real growth amongst the agricultural advisory elite or what? :-)

Provincial top user rating for October 2013



Top users in each province: October 2013

Eastern Cape	Mark Shoaipane Makashane
Free State	Griffith Hadebe
Gauteng	Vhuthu Gavhi
KwaZulu Natal	Daniel Marumo
Limpopo	Konute Jackson
Mpumalanga	Zanele Lusinabe
North West	Tlou Harrison
Northern Cape	Johan le Roux
Western Cape	Gcina Shiba