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OVERVIEW OF THE ESO ADDITIONAL PLANTS MODULE

Dr John Lapham

There are several crops which cannot be appropriately included in the main crop modules on ESO. That is, they cannot be displayed under the vegetables, fruit, grain crops or any of the other groups, and so they are shown in the "Additional Plants" module.

These plants fall into the following categories of crops:

- Essential oils,
- Mushrooms,
- Herbs and spices,
- Medicinal plants, and
- Agro-forestry plants.
- Flowers, particularly the Cape flora or fynbos, in addition to the comprehensive information in the "Flowers" module of ESO.

Essential oils are found in a variety of plants. It is thought their role in the biology of the plant is to attract pollinating insects through the aroma, reduce competition from other plants by inhibiting seed germination or protect the plant from browsing animals through their adverse taste. Essential oils can be extracted from plants by a number of methods discussed on ESO. ESO provides an "**Overview**" on Essential oils as well as some "**Production**" and "**Processing and Use**" information.

There are numerous types of mushrooms that are edible, but only 6 types make up about 90% of production. Often mushroom production is on a large-scale with high levels of hygiene required. However, if the appropriate varieties are selected it is possible to produce mushrooms on a small-scale. Information on small-scale production is included in the "Extension Guides" at the end of the "Mushrooms" section of "Additional Crops" on ESO. The module provides information on "**Mushroom types**" and the "**Cultivation**" of mushrooms.

Herbs are plants that are valued for their flavour,

scent or other qualities. They are generally used for culinary or medicinal purposes. Culinary herbs are distinguished from vegetables in that they provide flavour to food rather than substance. Herbs, used as fresh products, are distinguished from spices which are normally dried. Some plants are used both as an herb and a spice. ESO provides general information on both herbs and spices as well as the "**Herb market.**"

There are a wide range of annual plants, shrubs and trees that have some medicinal properties. Much of the information originates from traditional practices used over the centuries. Many of these plant products are harvested and sold on the informal market sector. The medicinal plants section on ESO is divided into "African plants" and "Medicinal plant uses."

Agro-forestry involves the production of timber to supply pulp mills, sawmills and factories which process the raw materials. Wood is a key raw material in many industries such as mining, construction, poles for electricity distribution and telecommunications, furniture, pulp and paper manufacture and energy production. The Agroforestry section on ESO provides an "**Overview**" and general information on specifically **South African agroforestry**.



Dr John Lapham

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Tips and tools for advisors

Xolile Dhlamini

Working with local leaders

- Select good, efficient local leaders
- Select leaders who have a good relationship with other farmers
- Always inform them about upcoming extension activities
- Make regular visits so that they do not feel isolated or left out
- Train them e.g. how to hold meetings or demonstrations
- Encourage them to take initiative and to act with independence
- Spend time in developing their skills and attributes
- Encourage local initiative and self-reliance
- Avoid spending too much time with one leader

ESO NATIONAL TOP USER:

The monthly ESO National Top User will receive the following prizes: First time ESO National User 2014: **4 Gig USB memory stick**, second time ESO National User 2014: **Digital Camera**, third time ESO National User 2014: **Nokia Lumia 520**, fourth time ESO National User 2014: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

Congratulations to Ms Vonani Stella Mabunda (Limpopo Department of Agriculture), who is the ESO National Top User for July 2014.

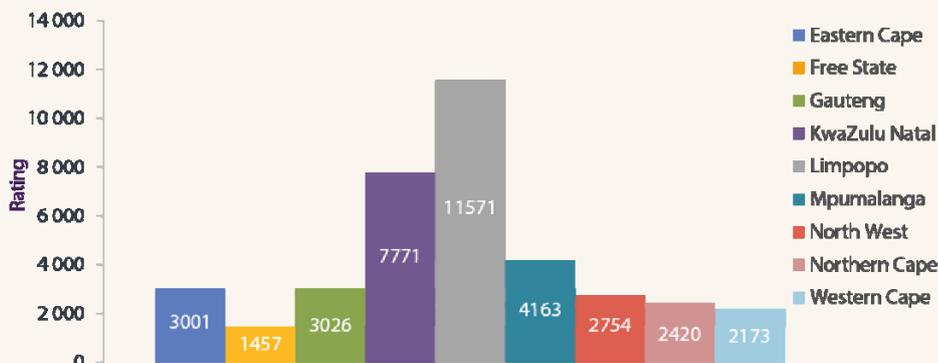


Ms Vonani Stella Mabunda

ESO UTILISATION: JULY 2014

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 ESO National Top User of the Month.

ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USER GRAPH



ESO PROVINCIAL TOP USERS

PROVINCE	NAME
Eastern Cape	Sondlo Nokwanda
Free State	Griffith Hadebe
Gauteng	Lesego Phakedi
KwaZulu Natal	Sifiso Mthabela
Limpopo	Vonani Stella Mabunda
Mpumalanga	Lucas Shabangu
North West	Tlou Harrison
Northern Cape	Amelia Viljoen
Western Cape	Wilna Brink

WHY ESO IS IMPORTANT TO ME

Extension Suite Online (ESO) is important to me, because it is an excellent information tool that helps to give me relevant and diverse information at the right time as long as I am connected to the internet and logged in to the system. ESO is easy to use and works much faster than other tools, such as trying to access information through libraries, which will take up unnecessary and valuable time.

I work **SMARTER** when I use ESO, because I can access information everywhere, anytime. All you need to be able to access ESO is a network connection, your username and password and a little bit of your time and from there on you will always be connected. I can log into the system even while I am preparing food or watching television.

Through ESO I have managed to develop crop menus and access manuals, even in group discussions I can access valuable information. It is so easy to get solutions to every problem, sometimes farmers ask questions relating to specific production areas, and as an advisor you have to check the information quickly and be able to give those answers there and then, and ESO enables me to do just that.

I would like to encourage my colleagues who are not yet registered on ESO to do so as it is a serious program within our department. Everyone, especially new and inexperienced advisors should use ESO as "agricultural information food" to stay "fed" with the help of this technology in getting useful information even while learning and studying.

PEST TALK: FEATURED PEST

Further information on all featured pests can be found on ESO.

Scientific Name: *Colias electo*
Popular Name: African Clouded Yellow

In the immature stage it is a small light-green caterpillar, which feeds on the underside of leaves. The caterpillar feeds on the green tissue resulting in holes in the leaves. Also known as the Lucern Butterfly.



African Clouded Yellow

Send your pest or disease related questions to newsletter@esuite.co.za with your name, province and the question and we will answer you via ESO's Question and Answer module or in the newsletter.

ESO TECH TIPS: Using Excel Formula's

Portia Maibelo

Microsoft Excel is a very useful tool when working with data through its multiple features for managing data. One of the most powerful features is the ability to calculate numerical information using formulas. All formulas in Excel, always begin with an equal (=) sign.

For example, the formula to calculate the growth percentage between two values is expressed as = **(new value - original value) / (original value)**. The original value represents the value that the percentage of change is based on, and new value represents the value that has changed. The steps to

enter these values in excel spreadsheet are as follows:

To calculate the growth percentage of prices for Tomatoes (fresh) in Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market between April 2014 (6,799.11 R/ton) and May 2014 (7,970.59 R/ton), the following formula can be entered in an Excel spreadsheet:

- Enter original value without the comma (**6799.11**) in **cell A3** and new values (**7970.59**) in **cell B3**
- In cell **C3** type in the formula **= (B3-A3)/A3**
- Alternatively type an **equal sign**, then (click in **cell B3** - click **cell A3**)/Click **cell A3** then press **ENTER**
- To display the results as a percentage, highlight **cell C3** and on the **Home** tab in the **Numbers** group click on the % sign.

Do you have any technology related questions? Send them to newsletter@esuite.co.za, with your name, province and the question and we will answer them in a following newsletter edition.



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