

NZ Blackcurrant Co-operative

Mid Term Update (September 2019)

The Growing Cycle – Winter on the farm!

New Zealand has experienced a very mild winter so far to the end of August. The main growing area for Blackcurrants in the South Island even experienced temperatures as high as 20 degC during July, which is traditionally the coldest month of the year. August daytime temperatures have also been warm, with several days up to 18 degC. This is 5 to 6 degrees C above normal daytime temperatures, and the monthly daytime average temperature this year was 13.5degC – more than 2 degC above normal.



Night-time temperatures have been more like normal average temperatures, however the overall winter “chill” has been less this year than normal.

Growers have been noticing this pattern now for the last 5 years, so it now seems to be the new “normal”. It remains to be seen how much this will affect the harvest yield this summer, although growers have noticed that healthy plants will still produce good crops of blackcurrants, even in these warmer years.

Source: <https://www.accuweather.com/en/nz/ashburton/247031/august-weather/247031?year=2019>

Winter was rather dry up until some heavy rain in the first half of September, which will be great for the spring growth in the coming months.

Growers have consciously tried to reduce the spray inputs these last few years, so the coming few months will be important to estimate the health of the plants and the size of the harvest. In addition, growers have been removing areas of plants which do not produce well. This should mean that the overall yield per hectare increases

Variety of the Month

Kepler

Kepler is a variety of blackcurrant that was developed in New Zealand by a joint venture between the New Zealand government research group, Plant and Food (<https://www.plantandfood.co.nz>) and the New Zealand Blackcurrant Industry. Kepler was developed as part of an active programme to produce new varieties of blackcurrants to meet the demands of the market, and changing climate.



The Kepler variety was first registered in 2012, so it is still quite young, however recent harvests have shown that it has good levels of the important active ingredients (anthocyanins), as well as being an excellent variety for all-round flavour.

Although Kepler only represents less than 10% of the total crop at the moment, the promise that it is showing in the warmer areas may mean that it could become an important variety for the future.



Kepler of course is a famous name in science, but in New Zealand the name Kepler is most well known as one of most beautiful of the “Great Walks” in the South Island – The Kepler Track.

There is no doubt that the benefits of Blackcurrants for exercise will be of great value if you ever get the chance to make this beautiful walk!

New Products or Recipes

BlackMax Performance Nutrition

BlackMax® is a New Zealand powdered blackcurrant supplement scientifically formulated to maximize your performance through nutrition. With so many sports nutrition products on the market it can be hard to choose which supplement is for you. The BlackMax® sports nutrition ingredients have been proven to; Improve speed, performance and endurance, reduce sports induced muscle damage and provide sustained long-term energy release.

BlackMax® blackcurrant sports powder quickly and completely dissolves in water. This means that it is easy to make up and drink, and the anthocyanins in the powder are readily available to be rapidly taken up by your body.

It is used successfully by cyclists, triathletes and other endurance athletes in New Zealand.

