

Merry Christmas

The Skeltons team wishes you a safe and enjoyable festive season with your family and friends. Thank you for your support this year, we look forward to growing with you in 2011.

Christmas opening hours

Skeltons and Farmlands Hastings and Napier stores will be closed on 25 December, reopening 29 December, then closing on 1 January, reopening 5 January. We will be open our normal hours on all other days including Saturdays from 8am to 12pm and weekdays from 7.30am to 5pm.

If there is anything you need over this period, please contact one of our technical advisors and we will endeavour to supply your needs.

Farewell and welcome

After three years of sterling service, we farewell Lynda Jane from the Hastings Skeltons store. A warm welcome to Glenis Brown who will be looking after all our admin and accounting needs.

Apple tree irrigation

Irrigation management on crops is often misunderstood, producers often apply too much or insufficient irrigation water. Apple trees will transpire about 20L to 40L per day, depending on conditions. Mature dwarf trees will transpire around two thirds of a mature semi-intensive tree.

About 40 percent of the water extracted by an apple tree comes from the first 300mm to 400mm of soil. The soil needs to provide sufficient water to prevent stress during the growing period from green tip until fruit set.

After fruit set, the vegetative growth phase starts and is a good time to consider reducing water inputs to minimise extension growth. A prolonged period of moisture stress in December, January or February can beneficially improve apple dry matter and fruit firmness in apples. At the fruit swell stage sufficient water is required to prevent serious moisture deficits.

Apple tree irrigation *continued*

As a grower there are basic things you should know and do, namely:

- know your soil type, water holding capacity, infiltration rates, full point, refill point
- know the hydraulic characteristics of your soil
- find out the depth of the rooting zone then determine the potential rooting zone
- record the daily evapotranspiration data (probably available in your local newspaper)
- Set up and use an accurate rain gauge
- Record soil moisture regularly from monitoring devices (usually weekly). Readings should be made at the same time for each recording and ideally earlier in the morning
- Keep good records of all of your data and use them.

Good irrigation management can reduce costs, improve fruit quality, and reduce pest and/or disease problems.

HBFA Fishing Competition

Hawke's Bay turned on the sun for the annual Hawke's Bay Fruitgrowers' Association fishing competition. Congratulations to those who caught the biggest fish in their respective categories. Well done to Brett Charlton who caught the largest Kahawai at 3.4kg and Craig Treneman the biggest Ray at 4.1kg.

Weather watch

Weather summary for November at Trotter Road:

	2008	2009	2010	10 year average
Rainfall (mm)	17.8	14.1	10.6	28.4
Average temp °C	15.4	15	15	15
Average max temp °C	21.4	21.4	20.7	21
Average min temp °C	8.4	8.5	9	8.4
Growing degree days	178.4	163.4	156	162.4
Rain since Jan. 1st (mm)	598	704	926	705



Challenges for vegetables

Depending on climatic conditions, a good foliar could be required for a 'pick me up' for plants. Generally seaweeds are very good at helping stressed plants recover and are good value for money when applied early before flower initiation.

Overuse of early nitrogen simply results in larger leaf mass for small roots to support and should be avoided. Stimulating more root hairs should be key.

Visual diagnosis of any nutritional problem is often inaccurate so leaf testing is more effective.

Trace elements such as zinc in onions or boron in tomatoes or squash, are invaluable and good value for later crop development.

Skeltons has an extensive range of seaweeds such as Alga, through to Amino acid type 'Amino Quelant' to help your crop achieve its full potential yield.

Mite control

Mite control relies on field monitoring, there are three suggested appropriate timings for monitoring. Late November to early December, late December to early January, and late January to mid February.

Failure to control mite population outbreaks can seriously reduce leaf condition, which in turn has an impact on apple sizing and colouring. Fenamite is the preferred miticide for control and this year WHP has been reduced to 45 days, which offers more flexibility in the use of the product. If mite blowouts occur close to harvest, applications of spraying oil may be required.



Leaf damage from mites on Pacific Rose that has contributed to poor colour development.

What's in store for...

Hand thinning Skeltons has a full range of orchard ladders and sizing rings to suit your apple thinning needs.

Orchard equipment We stock Caltex oils and lubricants, degreasing agents, CRC and greases. Get started with servicing your tractors, hydraladas etc before harvest arrives.

Harvest needs We have a full range of picking buckets and accessories, as well as a staplers and staples, chalk, bin cards, bin covers and gloves. We stock refractometers, iodine, pattern starch index charts and colour swatches for maturity testing.

Sun protection Skeltons stock Cancer Society 400ml, 1L and 2.5L pump bottles. All SPF 30+.

Christmas In store is a great range of Griffins biscuits, lollies and more - perfect for staff and family presents.

Promotions on now!

Win a Masport BBQ

As a Farmlands Shareholder, every purchase you make puts you in the draw to win a Masport 4 Burner Entertainer Plus BBQ (\$998). Competition drawn 17 December.

Win a De Longhi wine cabinet

With every 5L purchase of PipStar Encaps you receive one entry into the draw for a wine cabinet (\$1200 value). Closes 10 December.

Farmlands Card Corner

Christmas is a very busy time, especially for growers. Which is why when it comes to buying gifts, it needs to be quick and simple, and relatively painless! Shopping with your Farmlands Card meets this criteria, and with wide acceptance across Hawke's Bay, you can get pretty much whatever you want to give.

Events

HB Fruitgrowers Industry Awards Night

All Growers are invited to attend the industry awards

When: 10 February 2011

Where: Havelock North Community Centre

Time: Doors open at 7pm

Want more information?

Should you require further information on any articles in this newsletter, or on any other matter relating to horticulture, please contact us.

Skeltons

233 Ruahapia Road, Hastings.
Phone: 06 876 8029
Email: info@skeltons.co.nz

www.skeltons.co.nz



Call one of our technical field team direct

Hawke's Bay

- Malcolm Crawford 027 442 8947
- Jeff Kevern 027 442 8945
- Andrew Whitworth 027 442 8946
- Chris Herries 027 443 3910
- Lachlan McKay 027 444 0838
- Blake Herbison 027 284 4147

- Evan Walsh 027 201 3481
- James Cropper 027 442 8948
- Martin Taylor 027 298 8800
- Dave Llewellyn 027 227 2016
- Biological Unit**
- Todd Whiffen 027 457 2697

The information contained in this publication is of a general nature and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional advice in specific cases



Member of
ICD GROUP
INDEPENDENT CROPCARE DISTRIBUTORS LTD

