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SOIL PREPARATION AND PLANTING ON ESO

Sabhinah Mahlangu

Access Soil Preparation on Extension Suite Online (ESO)

At some stage every user of Extension Suite Online (ESO) will need access to information on **Soil Preparation**.

From the **Main Navigation Bar**, select the **Plant Navigation Tab**. Then click on the desired **Main Menu Icon** - Vegetables, Flowers, Fruit, Grains, Industrial Crops, Oil Seeds, Pastures, or Roots and Tubers and then, from the **Sidebar**, select **Production Information**, followed by **Soil Preparation** and finally click on **Preparation for Production** for the specific crop selected.

Soil preparation provides ESO users with information on how to prepare soil before planting. This information is based on the soil requirements of specific crops. Soil factors such as soil type depth, pH, electrical conductivity and fertility all play a major role in the establishment and growing of plants. Soil analysis is crucial

in order to adjust the soil to provide optimum levels of nutrients for crops. Soil fertility tests confirm the amount of each nutrient needed to obtain the best yield. It is important to prepare the soil one or two months prior to planting in order to: improve soil permeability and soil pH; apply required nutrients to the soil; and to allow decomposition of organic material.



Sabhinah Mahlangu



Soil preparation: Mechanically (tractors) or manually (raking).

propagation (tissue culture techniques). Seeding is the most commonly used method of propagation in annual crops; however it produces seedlings with genetic variations from the parent.

Seeds are sown directly into a field, or grown in nurseries to produce seedlings, which are then transplanted into the field when appropriate. Seeds are sown at different sowing depths; germination temperatures and germination periods also differ. Vegetative planting material produces a true-to-type plant. In terms of long term production, it shortens the development period of the tree which then fruits earlier. Vegetative propagules are grown under favourable nursery conditions (optimal temperature, growth medium, shade and mist irrigation system), then transplanted into the field when fully established.



Pictures above illustrate seedling and rooted stem cutting

TIPS FOR EXTENSIONISTS

Matsunke Malefane and Michèle Cloete

Modus operandi for successful Extensionists

Tips selected from experienced Extensionists on how to be the best:

- Spend more time with your clients.
- Recommend techniques and methods according to the client's needs (abilities, financial situation, environment etc).
- Empathise with clients first. Then guide them to solve their own problems.
- Utilise "opinion leaders" in the community to convey messages.
- Respect clients.
- Create and maintain credibility.
- Remember the main goal is: "To empower the client".

In order to enhance the ESO user experience, Manstrat AIS endeavours to simplify the way the system can be used by extension practitioners. Asking questions and viewing questions and answers have been simplified in the new improved Question and Answer Module, and are now conveniently placed in the "Start" tab, under the "Question and Answer" main menu icon.

Questions are now divided into 5 categories, namely: Animal Production, Plant Production, Extension, Economics, Geographical Information System and General. When accessing the Question and Answer section, the user will find the Animal Production questions box already open. By



clicking on the Plant Production tab below, the Animal Production box closes and the Plant Production box opens, revealing the related questions. When the user clicks on a question in any of these sections, the question and its answer is displayed.

To ask a question, the user only needs to click on the "Ask Question" button in the top right-hand corner of the page. Complete the provided form by choosing an appropriate category and title for the question and enter the question in the "Ask question" textbox. When completed the user can press the "Submit" button and the question will be redirected to the appropriate expert.

Get to know fellow Extension Suite Online users

This month's ESO user interview was conducted with the January 2013, **Provincial Top User** from Limpopo Department of Agriculture, **Mr Tebogo Thobakgale**.

What is your responsibility at the department? Crop Scientist, responsible for crop production in the Greater Letaba municipality

How long have you been working for the department? It will be 6 years in April 2013

How often do you make use of ESO? 4- 5 Times a week, also depending on the questions from my farmers while I am at the field.

What do you use Extension Suite Online for the most? Mostly Crop related diseases and cures- Problem solver, and then for various things such as soil analysis interpretation

What is the impact that ESO has on your relationship with your clients/farmers? My relationship with my farmers has improved a lot since I used to struggle to respond to my farmer's questions within a short time. Now, I just get on to the ESO on my phone and respond immediately.

Would you recommend ESO to your colleagues and why? Yes. Because all the information they need is at their disposal on ESO.



Mr Tebogo Thobakgale

What section or module within ESO do you use the most? Problem Solver, Regional Data (Farm Planning- Soil Maps)

In a few words, how would you describe ESO as an Extension tool? A convenient Library for Extensionists. I find it as the best tool that has ever come forth in decades.

Does ESO really make the execution of your duties easier, and in what way? Definitely, taking the Problem Solver as an example, I only just need to know the symptoms of the disease at hand, compare to the one shown on the system, and I have got my answer and my solution immediately.

UTILISATION OVERVIEW FOR JANUARY 2013

Thapedi Setshedi

ESO utilisation for the year started as expected: Not with a bang, but with a whimper. Fortunately we all know that this is the norm as extension officers and farmers alike have many things to attend to during the first few weeks of every year.

Once again, those who are ready, willing and able used the system extensively and our hope is that 2013 will see renewed energy and dedication from extension and advisory to serve their farmers with all the enthusiasm, assistance and aid at their disposal.

Many new and exciting additions have been added to the system, and especially the Plant Section, Problem Solvers and Irrigation Information Options and sub-Options were updated and improved. Users are encouraged to look at these as well as starting discussions in the Discussion Forum. This Forum can also be used to tell us what you want to see on ESO and what we can do to enhance your user experience.

Mr. Vhuthu Gavhi continues his *tour de force* as ESO National Top User. Well done sir!

MONTHLY NATIONAL ESO USER: JANUARY 2013

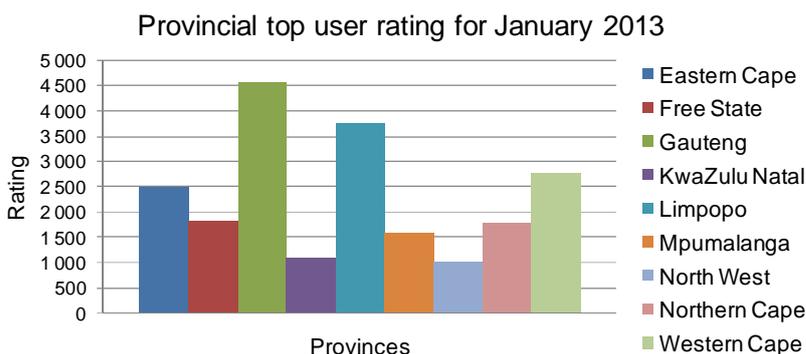
ESO utilisation is determined through monitoring user utilisation in the nine provinces and by attaching values to Visits, Pages Visited and Duration of Visits; a rating is calculated to establish the National ESO USER of the Month. The monthly national ESO user will

receive the following prizes: First time National ESO User 2013: **4 Gig USB memory stick**, second time National ESO User 2013: **Sony Digital Camera**, third time National ESO User 2013: **Blackberry cell phone**, National ESO User 2013: **Samsung Galaxy Tab**.

Congratulations to **Mr Vhuthu Gavhi (Gauteng Department of Agriculture & Rural Development)**, who is the ESO National User for January 2013. Be on the lookout for a front page article featuring Mr Gavhi and his role as Extension Officer in the Gauteng province.



Mr Vhuthu Gavhi



Top users in each province: January 2012	
Eastern Cape	Bonisiwe Patience Mbanjwa
Free State	Gabaiphiwe Gorden Godfrey Kgang
Gauteng	Vhuthu Gavhi
KwaZulu Natal	Nkosinathi Cyril Kubheka
Limpopo	Tebogo Thobakgale
Mpumalanga	Sibusiso Themba Ngele
North West	Molemoeng Diratsagae
Northern Cape	George du Preez
Western Cape	Dudley Adolph