

SOUTHCOAST EXTENSION MATTERS

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Sugarcane Flowering in Sezela for 2025

Flowering is induced when day length drops below 12.5 hours as we move from summer towards winter. Flowering is typically profuse when there are high minimum temperatures and adequate rainfall in February and March.

The likelihood of flowering increases when we experience more nights with minimum temperatures of 18°C or higher between the 7th and 31st March. This was the case in our area, with 12 nights averaging more than 18°C recorded over the induction period.

In addition to the warm nights, favourable rainfall was recorded between February and March, 203.1% and 116.9% of our LTM, respectively. This would have provided ample moisture to our soil profiles, prompting flowering later in the season.

Points to remember:

- Flowering is not a problem and can result in high sucrose yield if the cane is harvested before 31st October.
- Applying chemical ripeners to profusely flowering cane will cause additional crop stress.
- Be careful not to overestimate flowered cane. Although it may look tall, a large portion of the top has no sucrose and needs to be topped correctly i.e. at the natural breaking point.
- Fields that flower profusely (over 20%) should not be carried over.
- Flowered cane is more vulnerable to eldana if carried over resulting in further deterioration, i.e. sucrose reverts to glucose and fructose for the development of sideshoots.
- Flowered cane can be used as seed provided extra care is taken to prevent damage to buds, which may be more swollen than usual.



Flowering reports

Fields that have more than 20% flowering and were due to be carried over should rather be brought into this year's estimate.

A flowering index has been developed by SASRI for predicting the severity of flowering that is likely to occur within a given season in the various regions of the industry. The two weather stations located in Sezela and Hibberdene indicate flowering indices of 0.84 and 0.68, respectively.

FLOWERING INDEX KEY	
INDEX	EXTENT OF FLOWERING
0.00 – 0.20	No flowering expected
0.20 – 0.60	Only profuse flowering varieties expected to flower
0.60 – 0.80	Profuse and moderate flowering varieties expected to flower
> 0.80	Profuse, moderate and sparse flowering varieties expected to flower

VARIETY FLOWERING PROPENSITY	
MODERATE	PROFUSE
N16	N43
N30	N60
N31	N12
N35	N14
N39	N17
N43	N23
N48	N27
N51	N36
N55	N42
N60	N53
N62	N58
N64	N69
NCo376	N70
	N75
	N76
	N77
	N78