



MIDLANDS NORTH BIOSECURITY NEWS



SEEDCANE FOR SPRING 2021

The Seedcane Order Form was circulated in late June – if you haven't received it, please let us know. We can offer 7 different varieties of certified seedcane from the UCL Woodlands Nursery. Unfortunately, we will not be able to release N69 as hoped – there was contamination of N66 in this variety, so it has been agreed to convert all existing plantings to commercial fields and obtain new seedlings from SASRI's nursery supplier in early 2022.

Prices of seedcane for this season have been set as follows:

- Certified: R1100/ton, cut and loaded
- Approved: R850/ton, cut and loaded

In order for your nursery to be registered as Certified or Approved, the process starts with a **pre-planting inspection of the nursery fields** while they are fallow, more than 30 days after any soil disturbance, and prior to any land preparation for planting.

PLEASE NOTE: If the seedcane is planted in a different field to that inspected, your nursery cannot be registered, you will not receive the necessary line by line inspections from the P&D teams and you will not be able to use or sell your

seedcane.

We have been lenient on this over the past two seasons, but this will no longer be the case. Seedcane is the basis for a good quality crop and all efforts must be in place to ensure the correct procedures are followed.

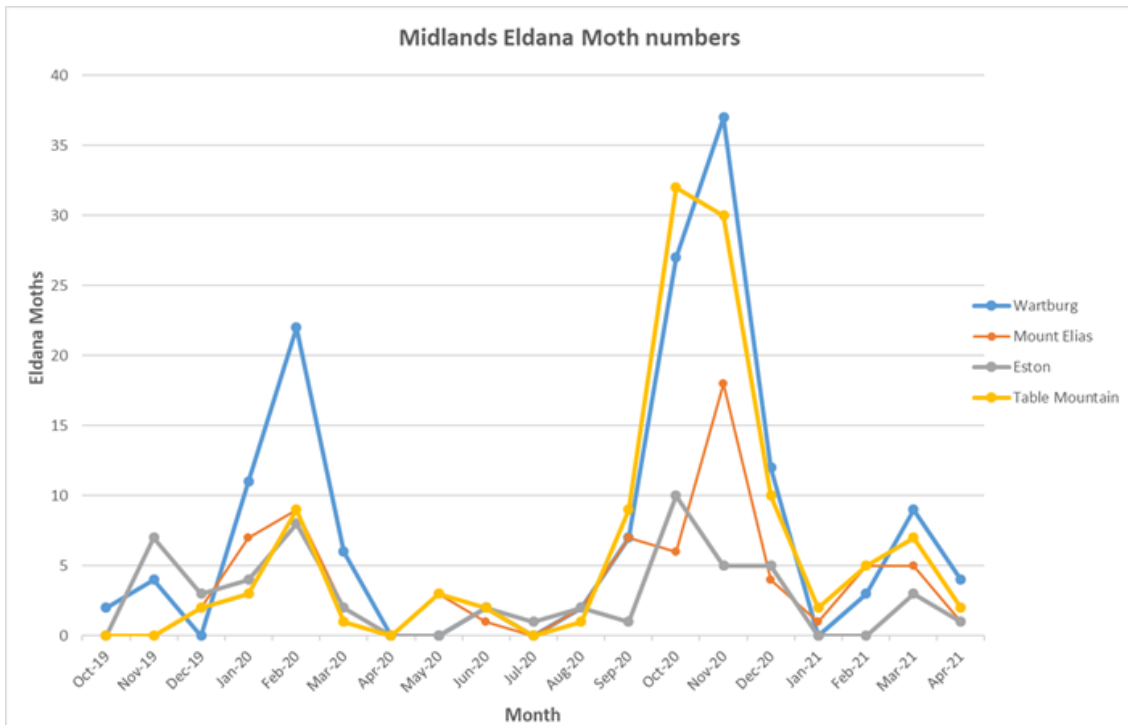
Should you require a pre-planting inspection of your planned nursery fields, please contact the Biosecurity Officer or the Extension Officer.



ELDANA NUMBERS ON THE INCREASE!

Eldana continues to persist in our area, with high numbers of fields affected, particularly in the areas immediately surrounding Wartburg. This ties in with the light trap data (see below) – the Wartburg site has consistently been the

highest in the Midlands North and South regions for the past three moth peaks. What is also worrying is that this pest is now being found in more small-scale grower fields, with Eldana numbers now at their highest for the last five years.



Light trap counts in Midlands North and Midlands South

SCOUTING FOR ELDANA

In light of the increasing spread of Eldana, growers will be required to increase their own scouting for this pest. This will ensure that growers can keep track of this pest more effectively. Furthermore, scouting from July to September will enable growers to plan their spray programmes to target the main moth peak from September to November. During this round of scouting, most attention will be paid to the fields that are to be harvested in the following season.

As agreed at a recent Midlands North P&D Committee meeting, growers will now be required to **scout 10 fields per month**. Attached is a scouting template which you are encouraged to use and send back to our office for record-keeping purposes so that we can direct our P&D teams to hotspot areas.

We had planned to conduct scouting training for farm staff in mid-July, but those plans have now been put on hold due to the latest COVID-19 Level 4 restrictions on gatherings. *Watch this space...*

CHANGE TO ELDANA RULES

On the back of the widespread Eldana and many fields needing to be harvested, the Midlands North P&D Committee has made some changes to Eldana rules. These changes will allow for Eldana cane to be more easily accommodated at the mills, without restricting allocation for non-Eldana cane.

The Eldana rules specific to cane in the **current season's estimate** have been adjusted as follows:

- \geq (greater than or equal to) **6E/100** stalks or $\geq 3\%$ Stalk Length Red (SLR). Harvest within 21 days.
- \leq (less than or equal to) **5E/100** stalks or $< 3\%$ SLR must be harvested within 60 days, or must be sprayed according to an Insecticide Resistance Action Committee (IRAC) compliant insecticide programme so that the treated cane may be harvested later that season

Essentially, we have not changed the Eldana hazard level – **5E/100** was always the threshold in terms of what action was required. We have just allowed 60 days instead of 21 days to harvest fields with lower Eldana counts which may not be suitable for spraying due to timing within the moth peak season. The periods of highest moth activity and resultant egg laying and hatching of 1st instar larvae are the most effective time to be spraying Eldana controlling chemicals. Once the larvae have entered the cane stalk, there is little to no chance of killing it by spraying.

A full copy of the latest Midlands North P&D Rules is attached for your further reading.

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