

# season update

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## WESTERN AUSTRALIA – JANUARY 2006 REPORT

### Climate

Typical summer conditions were interrupted by un-seasonal rainfall (heavy in parts) and cooler temperatures early in the month. Cyclone Clare brought humid conditions and rainfall (again heavy in parts) to the south west region mid month. Average mild summer conditions prevailed for the remainder of the month.

### Production

Valencia and lemon harvest continued this month. Harvest of White Flesh Grapefruit finished mid month.

### Phenology

Summer flush has been slowed by cooler and wetter than average conditions. Fruit is now at the cell expansion stage.

### Pests and Disease

There does not appear to be any major pest problems at present, but watch out for leaf miner on young trees and continue monitoring and control of Thrips, scale, mealybug, aphids and ants.

### Key Management tasks

This is a critical period for irrigation; water stress during this time can cause smaller fruit size. Monitor irrigation requirements closely and avoid water stress, especially if temperatures are high. Hand thinning can be carried out at this stage (January to February), remove wind blemished, damaged and small fruit. Apply 25 % of annual nitrogen (adjust according to crop load) and 30% of annual potassium (after final fruit drop stage) between now and April. Supplement potassium with foliar applications of KNO<sub>3</sub> and maintain good nitrogen: potassium ratios (2:1). Leaf nutrient analysis can be carried out anywhere between January and March – try to sample at the same time each year. Gibberellic acid (GA) spray programs for rind quality should be in place.

*Source: Helen Ramsey, WA Department of Agriculture*