# AgWeather Info



# **Horticulture Crop ET**

### AgWeather Evapotranspiration:

Knowing the daily evapotranspiration rate can help you determine the best time to irrigate commercial horticultural crops. Watering only when plants need water reduces irrigation costs, conserves Oklahoma water resources, and

helps you grow healthier plants. Evapotranspiration is an estimate of the water that evaporates from the soil surface ("evapo" in evapotranspiration) and the water a plant loses through transpiration ("transpiration" in evapotranspiration).

The evapotranspiration products available on the Oklahoma AgWeather web site (**http: //agweather.mesonet.org**) are weather-based tools that estimate daily water loss from a plant canopy. Using weather data from the closest Oklahoma Mesonet tower, unique evapotranspiration rates are calculated for some of Oklahoma's most important commercial horticulture crops. These include grape, peach, pecan, tomato, turfgrass, and watermelon. Reference evapotranspiration rates are calculated that represent a well-watered short crop canopy, similar to cut grass, or a well-



watered tall crop canopy, similar to alfalfa. These reference evapotranspiration rates are located in the Atmosphere section, under WEATHER on the Oklahoma AgWeather web site.

AgWeather evapotranspiration charts provide daily evapotranspiration rates and accumulated evapotranspiration rates back to the planting of the crop or the beginning of the growing season. Included in the evapotranspiration chart is the daily rainfall and accumulated rainfall. This provides a season-long perspective of plant water needs and the amount of rain that has fallen to meet those needs. Rainfall amounts reported are those collected at the nearest Oklahoma Mesonet tower and may not reflect rainfall received at your location. While a variation in rainfall amount might change when you water, it does not affect the accuracy of the evapotranspiration rates.

### AgWeather Evapotranspiration Chart:

To use the evapotranspiration rates to irrigate you need to think backwards. The evapotranspiration chart (see image below) shows the evapotranspiration rate in inches of water for each day in the red colored column. The most current

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Vegetable	<b>~</b>	Evapotra	anspirat	tion for tor	mato for Mangum				
All Vegetables Watermelon Tomato		Station	Date	Number of Days	Evapotranspiration (inch)	Accumulated Evapotranspiration (inch)	Rainfall (inch)	Accumulated Rainfall (inch)	Water Balance (inch)
Evapotranspiration Contour 1-Day Avg. 4	Hin Sod	MANG	2004 10-12	1	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	-0.10
Current Inversion Co 5-br Inversion (Ispae 50 br NCM MCS For:	nditions (rate)	MANG	2004- 10-11	2	0.05	0.15	0.01	0.01	0.14
JSDA Market News Oklahoma Vegetable 1900 Lact Sheet		MANG	2004- 10-10	3	0.04	0 19	0 12	0.13	-0.08
DSU Past Disanosti	29	MANG	2004- 10-09	4	0.11	0.30	0.00	0.13	-0.17
		MANG	2004 10-08	5	0.10	0.10	0.06	0.19	-0.21
		MANG	2004- 10 07	6	0.09	0.49	2.29	2.48	1.90
		MANG	2004- 10-06	1	0.11	0.59	0.01	2.49	1.90
		MANG	2004- 10-05	8	0.06	0.66	0.00	2.49	1.83
		MANG	2004 10-04	9	0.09	0.75	0.44	2.93	2.18
		MANG	2004- 10 03	10	0.10	0.85	0.00	2.93	2.05

date is at the top of the chart, descending through past dates as you scroll down the table. The chart shows the Mesonet station code, Date, Number of Days (descending), daily Evapotranspiration, Accumulated Evapotranspiration, dailv Rainfall amount (blue colored column), Accumulated Rainfall, and Water Balance. The Water Balance column values come from subtracting the Accumulated Evapotranspiration from the Accumulated Rainfall. All evapotranspiration and rainfall amounts are in inches of water lost or gained.

The Water Balance column numbers are negative (red) when the water lost through evapotranspiration exceeds the amount of rainfall. When the water gained

in accumulated rainfall is higher than that lost from accumulated evapotranspiration, the Water Balance column numbers are positive (blue). It is time to water when the negative value reaches the amount of water you want to provide your plants. See page 2 for specific crop irrigation guidelines.

### Using Evapotranspiration on OK AgWeather (http://agweather.mesonet.org):

Evapotranspiration rates provide a measure of the amount of water a commercial horticultural crop needs. Having a number that indicates plant water need can improve recordkeeping and provides a way to measure the effectiveness of irrigation decisions. There are a number of options and steps for each option to get the most out of using evapotranspiration rates to time irrigations. To get the most out of scheduling irrigations by evapotranspiration take some time to complete the following steps.

**1) Determine the basic soil type of the field.** Using a shovel or post hole digger, dig a two to three foot hole in several field locations that are representative of the field. Note the soil type as you dig and any restrictive layers.

Each type of soil has different water holding characteristics. In addition to holding different amounts of water soils also differ dramatically on how much of the water in the soil is available for use by plants. This is known as the "Available Water Capacity" of the soil. The available water in the soil is like having money in a checking account. The more available water capacity of a soil, the longer a plant can go without water stress.

anable water capacity of Son by Son Texture					
Soil Texture	Available Water Capacity inches per soil inch	Available Water Capacity inches per soil foot			
Sand	0.08	0.96			
Loamy Sand	0.11	1.32			
Sandy Loam	0.12	1.44			
Loam	0.15	1.80			
Silt Loam	0.18	2.16			
Silty Clay Loam	0.16	1.92			
Clay Loam	0.15	1.80			
Sandy Clay Loam	0.14	1.68			
Silty Clay	0.13	1.56			
Clay	0.12	1.44			
Sandy Clay	0.11	1.32			

Available Water Capacity of Soil by Soil Texture

The following are some ways to determine the soil type in your field.

• One source of soil information is from soil surveys available through the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) office the serves your county. Their phone number is listed under US Government and the USDA Service Center. Online NRCS information is available at http://soils.usda.gov.

• You can submit a soil sample to your local county OSU Extension Office for analysis of soil textural class by the Oklahoma State University Soil, Water and Forage Analytical Laboratory. If you choose to submit a sample, this would also be a good time to test your soil for nutrients.

• The following is a system for determining soil texture by feel developed by S. J. Thein and first presented in the Journal of Agronomy Education Vol. 8, pages 54-55 in 1979. Here is the process:

• Place a tablespoon of soil in your palm.

• Add water drop wise and knead to break up aggregates. Add water and knead till soil has the consistency of moldable putty.

• If the soil will not stay in a ball when squeezed and is not too wet, its soil type is **sand**.

• If the soil tays in a ball when squeezed, gently squeeze soil with your thumb against your forefinger to form a ribbon of uniform thickness and width. If you cannot create a ribbon, the soil is a **loamy sand**.

• If the soil makes a weak ribbon that breaks before it is one inch long it is a **loam** soil. Excessively wet a small pinch

of the soil and rub with your forefinger. If the loam feels very gritty it is a **sandy loam**. If it feels very smooth, it is a **silt loam**.

• If you can form a ribbon between one inch and two inches long, the soil is a **clay loam**. Excesively wet a small pinch of the soil and rub with your forefinger. If it feels very gritty, it is a **sandy clay loam** soil. If it feels very smooth, it is a **silty clay loam**.

• If you can make a strong ribbon 2 inches or longer before it breaks, the soil is **clay**. Excesively wet a small pinch of the soil and rub with your forefinger. If the clay feels very gritty it is a **sandy clay**. If it feels very smooth, it is a **silty clay**.

**2)** Determine the effective rooting depth of your crop. Below is a table of maximum effective rooting depth for fully grown plants when there is no soil restriction. It is critical to dig some test holes 2 to 3 feet deep to find out if there are any restrictions to rooting in the crop field. Common soil restrictions found in Oklahoma are compacted plow pan layer, impermiable clay layer, or shallow sandstone formation.

<b>2</b> .	-	
Shallow 18 inches to 2 feet	Moderately deep 3 feet	Deep 4 feet
Broccoli	Bean (bush or pole)	Asparagus
Cabbage	Beet	Pumpkin
Corn, Sweet	Canteloupe	Squash, Winter
Garlic	Chard (Swiss)	Sweet potato
Onion	Cucumber	Tomato
Potato	Eggplant	Watermelon
Spinach	Mustard (Collards)	
	Pepper	
	Squash, Summer	
From Knott's Handbook for Vog	table Crower's 2rd edition 1000	

#### **Effective Rooting Depths of Various Vegetables**

From Knott's Handbook for Vegetable Grower's, 3rd edition, 1988.

#### **Effective Rooting Depths of Select Fruits**

3 feet	4 feet
Grape	Pecan*
Apple	
Apricot	
Peach	
Pear	
Plum	

From Soil Water Monitoring and Mesasurement, Pacific Northwest Publication (PNW0475), December 1994.

\* Pecan rooting depth based on review of Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas university extension publications.

A hands-on approach to determine the rooting depth for plants in your field is to carefully excavate the soil along one side of three fully grown, healthy plants. Dig slowly and examine the soil for evidence of roots as you go. By digging until no roots are seen, you can determine the depths where the bulk of the roots exist in the soil.

**3)** Select the percentage of water depletion for the soil type in your field. Using the charts below you can determine the minimum soil water capacity needed by the crop you are growing. The charts are arranged by the percent of water capacity you want to maintain in the soil. The evapotranspiration value is the maximum evapotranspiration loss that can occur and still maintain the indicated percent of available water in the soil. The first chart on page 4 provides suggested percent of available water quidelines for various horticultural crops.

#### Suggested % of Available Water to Maintain in the Soil

80%-70%	65% - 60%	50%
Cucumber	Bean (bush or pole)	Asparagus
Spinach	Beet	Garlic
Tomato	Broccoli	Onion
	Cabbage	Pumpkin
	Canteloupe	Squash, Winter
	Chard (Swiss)	Sweet potato
	Corn, Sweet	Watermelon
	Eggplant	
	Mustard (Collards)	Apple
	Pepper	Grape
	Potato	Peach
	Squash, Summer	Pecan

### Accumulated ET value when water capacity would drop to 80% of available water in inches:

Root depth	Loamy sand	Silty clay Ioam	Silty clay
6 inches	-0.14	-0.22	-0.16
1 foot	-0.29	-0.43	-0.31
1.5 feet	-0.43	-0.65	-0.47
2 feet	-0.58	-0.86	-0.62
2.5 feet	-0.72	-1.08	-0.78
3 feet	-0.86	-1.30	-0.94
3.5 feet	-1.01	-1.51	-1.09
4 feet	-1.15	-1.73	-1.25
5 feet	-1.44	-2.16	-1.56
6 feet	-1.73	-2.59	-1.87
7 feet	-2.02	-3.02	-2.18
8 feet	-2.30	-3.46	-2.50
9 feet	-2.59	-3.89	-2.81
10 feet	-2.88	-4.32	-3.12

# Accumulated ET value when field capacity soil would drop to 75% of available water in inches:

Root depth	Loamy sand	Silty clay Ioam	Silty clay
6 inches	-0.18	-0.27	-0.20
1 foot	-0.36	-0.54	-0.39
1.5 feet	-0.54	-0.81	-0.59
2 feet	-0.72	-1.08	-0.78
2.5 feet	-0.90	-1.35	-0.98
3 feet	-1.08	-1.62	-1.17
3.5 feet	-1.26	-1.89	-1.37
4 feet	-1.44	-2.16	-1.56
5 feet	-1.80	-2.70	-1.95
6 feet	-2.16	-3.24	-2.34
7 feet	-2.52	-3.78	-2.73
8 feet	-2.90	-4.30	-3.12
9 feet	-3.20	-4.90	-3.51
10 feet	-3.60	-5.40	-3.90

### Accumulated ET value when field capacity soil would drop to 70% of available water in inches:

Root depth	Loamy sand	Silty clay Ioam	Silty clay
6 inches	-0.22	-0.32	-0.23
1 foot	-0.43	-0.65	-0.47
1.5 feet	-0.65	-0.97	-0.70
2 feet	-0.86	-1.30	-0.94
2.5 feet	-1.08	-1.62	-1.17
3 feet	-1.30	-1.94	-1.40
3.5 feet	-1.51	-2.27	-1.64
4 feet	-1.73	-2.59	-1.87
5 feet	-2.16	-3.24	-2.34
6 feet	-2.59	-3.89	-2.81
7 feet	-3.02	-4.54	-3.28
8 feet	-3.46	-5.18	-3.74
9 feet	-3.89	-5.83	-4.21
10 feet	-4.32	-6.48	-4.68

## Accumulated ET value when field capacity soil would drop to 60% of available water in inches:

Root depth	Loamy sand	Silty clay Ioam	Silty clay
6 inches	-0.29	-0.43	-0.31
1 foot	-0.58	-0.86	-0.62
1.5 feet	-0.86	-1.30	-0.94
2 feet	-1.15	-1.73	-1.25
2.5 feet	-1.44	-2.16	-1.56
3 feet	-1.73	-2.59	-1.87
3.5 feet	-2.02	-3.02	-2.18
4 feet	-2.30	-3.46	-2.50
5 feet	-2.88	-4.32	-3.12
6 feet	-3.46	-5.18	-3.74
7 feet	-4.03	-6.05	-4.37
8 feet	-4.61	-6.91	-4.99
9 feet	-5.18	-7.78	-5.62
10 feet	-5.76	-8.64	-6.24

### Accumulated ET value when field capacity soil would drop to 65% of available water in inches:

Root depth	Loamy sand	Silty clay Ioam	Silty clay
6 inches	-0.25	-0.38	-0.27
1 foot	-0.50	-0.76	-0.55
1.5 feet	-0.76	-1.13	-0.82
2 feet	-1.01	-1.51	-1.09
2.5 feet	-1.26	-1.89	-1.37
3 feet	-1.51	-2.27	-1.64
3.5 feet	-1.76	-2.65	-1.91
4 feet	-2.02	-3.02	-2.18
5 feet	-2.52	-3.78	-2.73
6 feet	-3.02	-4.54	-3.28
7 feet	-3.53	-5.29	-3.82
8 feet	-4.03	-6.05	-4.37
9 feet	-4.54	-6.80	-4.91
10 feet	-5.04	-7.56	-5.46

### Accumulated ET value when field capacity soil would drop to 50% of available water in inches:

Root depth	Loamy sand	Silty clay Ioam	Silty clay
6 inches	-0.36	-0.54	-0.39
1 foot	-0.72	-1.08	-0.78
1.5 feet	-1.08	-1.62	-1.17
2 feet	-1.44	-2.16	-1.56
2.5 feet	-1.80	-2.70	-1.95
3 feet	-2.16	-3.24	-2.34
3.5 feet	-2.52	-3.78	-2.73
4 feet	-2.88	-4.32	-3.12
5 feet	-3.60	-5.40	-3.90
6 feet	-4.32	-6.48	-4.68
7 feet	-5.04	-7.56	-5.46
8 feet	-5.76	-8.64	-6.24
9 feet	-6.48	-9.72	-7.02
10 feet	-7.20	-10.80	-7.80

\*

#### **Total Available Water in inches:**

Root depth	Loamy sand*	Silty clay loam*	Silty clay*
6 inches	0.72	1.08	0.78
1 foot	1.44	2.16	1.56
1.5 feet	2.16	3.24	2.34
2 feet	2.88	4.32	3.12
2.5 feet	3.60	5.40	3.90
3 feet	4.32	6.48	4.68
3.5 feet	5.04	7.56	5.46
4 feet	5.76	8.64	6.24
5 feet	7.20	10.80	7.80
6 feet	8.64	12.96	9.36
7 feet	10.08	15.12	10.92
8 feet	11.52	17.28	12.48
9 feet	12.96	19.44	14.04
10 feet	14.40	21.60	15.60

\* Loamy sand available water 0.11 inches/inch of soil

\* Silt loam available water 0.16 inches/inch of soil

\* Silty clay available water 0.13 inches/inch of soil

**4) Determine irrigation system water delivery rate and efficiency.** Check the specifications of your irrigation system for water delivery rate. If your system has a slow water delivery, you will need to irrigate sooner. If irrigation is delayed until too much water is depleted from the soil, you may not be able to keep up with the water demands of your crop.

#### Range of Application Efficiencies by percent for Various Irrigation Systems\*

Surface Irrigation	Sprinkler Irrigation	Microirrigation	
Basin 60 - 95	Handmove 65 - 80	Point source emitters 75 - 95	
Border 60 - 90	Traveling Gun 60 - 70	Line source emitter 70 - 95	
Furrow 50 - 90	Center Pivot & Linear 70 - 95		
Surge 60 - 90	Solid Set 70 - 85		

\* Efficiencies can be much lower due to poor design or management. These values are intended for general comparisons. From Efficiencies and Water Losses of Irrigation Systems, Rogers, D.H., Lamm, F.R., Alam, M., Trooein, T.P., Clark, G.A., Barnes, P.L. and Mankin, K. Kansas State University Extension Publication MF-2243, May 1997.

#### Warm-season Lawn Grass (bermudagrass or zoysiagrass):

- Click on HORTICULTURE, then select Turf, then Evapotranspiration.
- Select nearest Mesonet Site location.
- For Grass Type, choose Warm-season.
- For Season Start Date, use the default date or select a date.
- Click on Get Turf Grass Data.

#### **Vegetables:**

- Click on HORTICULTURE, then select Vegetable, next choose All Vegetables, then Evapotranspiration.
- Select nearest Mesonet Site location.
- Enter the Planting Date for the vegetable of interest.

• Click on Get Vegetable-General Data.

• Go down the Water Balance column until it shows a negative **-0.5** for water sensitive vegetables or vegetables in sandy soils or **-1.0** for most vegetables or vegetables in clay soils and note the date. If your last watering occurred on or before this date, then it is time to water again.

#### Watermelon:

• Click on HORTICULTURE, then select Vegetables, next choose Watermelon, then Evapotranspiration.

• Select nearest Mesonet Site location.

• Enter the Watermelon Relative Maturity for the watermelon variety you planted, Early-season, Mid-season, or Late-season. Or select the Relative Days to Maturity for the variety planted.

- Enter Planting Date.
- Click on Get Watermelon Data.

• Go down the Water Balance column until it shows a negative **-1.5** and note the date. If your last watering occurred on or before this date, then it is time to water again.

#### Peach:

• Click on HORTICULTURE, then select Fruit and Nut, next choose Peach, then Evapotranspiration.

- Select nearest Mesonet Site location.
- Enter the Peach Relative Maturity for the peach variety you grow, Early-season, Mid-season, or Late-season.
- For Season Start Date, use the default date or select a date close to peach blooming.
- Click on Get Peach Data.

• Go down the Water Balance column until it shows a negative **-2.0** and note the date. If your last watering occurred on or before this date, then it is time to water again.

#### Cool-season Lawn Grass (tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass or perennial rye grass):

• Click on HORTICULTURE, then select Turf, then Evapotranspiration.

- Select nearest Mesonet Site location.
- For Grass Type, choose Cool-season.
- For Season Start Date, use the default date or select a date.
- Click on Get Turf Grass Data.

• Go down the Water Balance column until it shows a negative **-0.5** for high maintenance cool-season lawns or **-1.0** for lower maintenance turf areas and note the date. If your last watering occurred on or before this date, then it is time to water again.

#### Tomato:

- Click on HORTICULTURE, then select Vegetables, next choose Tomato, then Evapotranspiration.
- Select nearest Mesonet Site location.
- Enter the Planting Date (transplant date) for your tomatoes.
- Click on Get Tomato Data.

• Go down the Water Balance column until it shows a negative **-0.5** for caged and staked tomatoes or **-1.0** for ground-grown tomatoes and note the date. If your last watering occurred on or before this date, then it is time to water again.

#### Grape:

• Click on HORTICULTURE, then select Fruit and Nut, next choose Grape, then Evapotranspiration.

• Select nearest Mesonet Site location.

• For Season Start Date, use the default date or select a date close to when grape leaves appeared.

• Click on Get Grape Data.

• Go down the Water Balance column until it shows a negative **-1.5** and note the date. If your last watering occurred on or before this date, then it is time to water again.

#### Pecan:

• Click on HORTICULTURE, then select Fruit and Nut, next choose Pecan, then Evapotranspiration.

- Select nearest Mesonet Site location.
- For Season Start Date, use the default date or select a date close to when pecan leaves appeared.
- Click on Get Pecan Data.

• Go down the Water Balance column until it shows a negative **-3.0** and note the date. If your last watering occurred on or before this date, then it is time to water again.

#### Corn:

- Click on CROPS, then Corn, next Evapotranspiration.
- Select the nearest Mesonet Site location.
- Enter the Relative Maturity Days for the corn variety planted.
- Enter the Planting Date.

#### **Cotton:**

- Click on CROPS, then select Cotton, then Evapotranspiration.
- Select the nearest Mesonet Site location.
- Enter the Relative Maturity Days for the cotton variety planted.
- Enter the Planting Date.
- Click on Get Cotton Data.

• Go down the ET\_ACC column to the last rainfall or the last irrigation date. Irrigate when the ET\_ACC value estimates a 50% depletion of available water in the crop root zone. Cotton's effective rooting depth can vary from 3 feet to 6.5 feet. The first table below lists the total available water of different soils to the depth indicated. The second table shows the accumulated ET (ET\_ACC) value when 50% of the available water has been lost and needs to be replaced with irrigation or rainfall.

#### Total Available Water:

Root depth	Sandy loam	Silt loam	Silty clay
3 feet	4.3 inches	6.5 inches	4.7 inches
4.5 feet	6.5 inches	9.7 inches	7.0 inches
6 feet	8.6 inches	13.0 inches	9.4 inches

#### Accumulated ET when 50% of Available Water Lost:

Root depth	Sandy loam	Silt loam	Silty clay
3 feet	2.15	3.25	2.35
4.5 feet	3.25	4.85	3.5
6 feet	4.3	6.5	4.7

#### Peanut:

