

More heavy rain batters South Africa's citrus producers

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 4 June 2026

With growers in Eastern and Western Cape still unable to assess flood impact on farms, CGA says damage likely to increase



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A limited number of South African citrus growers have still not regained access to their orchards to assess the damage of the May floods in the Western and Eastern Cape.

The South African Citrus Growers' Association (CGA) said this means that preliminary damage estimates will likely rise over time.

Also, damage in the form of fruit drop from trees often has a delayed impact that cannot be immediately assessed.

Initial assessments by the CGA indicate that recent severe weather will cause a decrease of at least 5 per cent in expected export estimates from flood-damaged areas.

“The areas are Patensie, in the Eastern Cape, and Citrusdal and Boland in the Western Cape,” CGA noted.

To make things worse, heavy rains and high winds have again battered the Southern and Eastern Cape this week.

The CGA said the mandarin crop has been impacted the most by the floods, as the country’s main production regions were affected, with harvesting activities interrupted at a critical early stage.

“Most affected farms have worked hard to recover from flood-related delays, and while export volumes have been revised downward, the integrity and reliability of supply to international markets remains intact,” the association stated.



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“In general, orchards situated close to rivers bore the brunt of the flooding, while most orchards received rainfall without damage and are able to supply high-quality fruit.”

Dr Boitshoko Ntshabele, chief executive of the CGA, said thoughts remain with farming communities across these regions, many of whom have over the past weeks been dealing with both immediate losses and the longer-term implications of infrastructure damage.

“The timing of the rain and storms was particularly challenging, as the citrus season was just beginning to gain momentum,” he said.

“While it remains too early to exactly quantify the cost of the floods, it is clear that orchards, farm structures and road infrastructure have been affected, mostly around Patensie in the Eastern Cape.”

The CGA said that, in general, the season is not running later than last year and is around two to three weeks ahead.

Earlier this month, the CGA welcomed the immediate declaration of a national state of disaster.

It also now supports the call of fellow agriculture associations, such as the South African Table Grape Industry (Sati), for both provincial and national government authorities to provide increased disaster relief and recovery support to producers and rural communities.

The most severe impact from the floods was felt in the Kouga Municipality in the Eastern Cape, particularly in the Gamtoos Valley around Patensie.

Citrus orchards have been flooded, some to such an extent that topsoil has been washed away, trees uprooted and roads destroyed.

In the Western Cape, areas including Citrusdal and the Boland also experienced intense rainfall.

While water levels in Citrusdal were higher than during the two previous flood events in 2023 and 2024, the overall damage appears less severe, with key access routes remaining operational.

“This is largely due to the infrastructure improvement and river works implemented by the provincial government over the past two years,” said Ntshabele.

“These efforts have saved lives and safeguarded a citrus export season for the Oliphant’s River Valley.”

The extreme weather challenges come at an already difficult time for growers, who are navigating global disruptions due to the war in the Middle East.

Rising input costs, especially diesel and fertiliser, as well as significantly higher shipping costs, are also exerting pressure on the citrus industry.

“What had been shaping up as a strong season is now requiring a high degree of adaptability from producers and exporters alike,” Ntshabele added.