



agriculture & rural development

Department:
Agriculture and Rural Development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Cedara Research Station

Cedara Research Station is situated in the uMgungundlovu District Municipality, approximately 16 km from Pietermaritzburg and 12 km from Howick.

The Head Office of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is situated on Cedara. The Cedara College of Agriculture is situated on the Cedara Campus.

Postal address:

Private Bag X9059, Pietermaritzburg, 3200

Physical address:

1 Cedara Road, Cedara, Pietermaritzburg

Telephone : 033-355 9258



Situation:	S29° 32' 15 33 E30° 16' 09 19
Elevation:	1037 m (in vlei area) 1448 m (Swartkop)
Rainfall:	900 mm/annum
Topography:	Undulating, with slopes up to 16% Average slope 7%
Size:	1000 ha

THE PAST

The land upon which the Cedara Research Station was developed was acquired by the Natal Government in 1902, “to establish a Central Experimental Farm and Agricultural College for the training of young men and women intending to go farming”. It was under the control of the Director of Agricultural Experiments and Chemistry in Natal; the Director also acted as Principal of the College. At this time the property was not fenced, there were few trees and no buildings.

Due to the poor grazing, the outspan that existed on the property was not popular with the transport riders. In fact, it is said that the name Cedara means “Bleak and Barren”.

The farm buildings were built first, followed in 1905, by the erection of the College and hostel complex, and the launching of Cedara’s Agricultural Diploma Course in April of 1906. Attention was given to the development of the property for research purposes and 1907 saw the introduction of the first dairy nutrition experiments. Sheep and poultry were also introduced and in time, Cedara poultry gained an enviable reputation at the national shows and in egg laying tests.

Hundreds of experimental plots were prepared and plant introductory work, fertiliser studies, and pasture and veld management studies were initiated. Maize and other crops were tested with varying experiments and under different treatments. An important activity on Cedara at that time was the testing and demonstration of agricultural implements.

A forestry nursery was established at an early date and over 90 000 trees (gums, pines and wattles) were planted. The potential for the establishment of a wattle industry was investigated as early as 1913.



NATURAL RESOURCE INFORMATION

The climate is temperate: the summers are warm to hot and the winters cold, with frost. Cedara is situated entirely in the Moist Midlands Mistbelt BioResource Group (BRG) 5. This BRG falls in the 900 – 1 400m above sea level range and is generally a hilly, rolling country with a high percentage of arable land, where 47% is suitable for cropping.

Mean annual rainfall for this area ranges from 838 – 1140 mm.

Mean maximum January temperature for the research station is 25°C, while mean minimum July temperature is 4°C. Frost severity is recognized as light to moderate where, depending on the altitude, an average of 3 - 9 days of frost can occur over a 35 – 70 day period.

This BRG is generally rich in water resources. Soils are relatively deep, highly leached and strongly acid. Fertility is low, but physical properties are favourable. The topography of Cedara is rolling to flat with gradients varying from 7 to 16 %. It includes a fairly large area of wetland. Cedara is an important source of information for the high rainfall BRGs of the Province.

The natural grazing is characterised by the prevalence of “Ngongoni” grass (*Aristida junciformis*) and is relatively sour in type. Provision has therefore to be made for the carrying of livestock through the winter months. Climatic conditions favour the establishment of cultivated pastures, both for hay-making and grazing purposes.

RESEARCH STATION PROGRAMME

The research components at Cedara include agronomy, animal science, crop protection, biochemistry, biometrical services, horticulture, grassland science, and soil science and farm services (who provide services to all other sections). The Cedara soil, feed, water, plant and plant health laboratories serve research and farmers throughout the province. The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and Universities also use Cedara for their research programmes as guest researchers.

More detail is supplied under the relevant research directorates.