

New Plant Zone Hardiness Map Shows Temperature Shifts

Written by USDA Communications
Thursday, 09 February 2012 14:15

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A new TV feature is available on the USDA FTP site. The new TV feature can also be seen on USDA's YouTube channel and seen and downloaded as a video podcast.

FTP Download instructions:

The host: <ftp://ocbmtcmedia.download.akamai.com>

User name: usdanews

Password: Newscontent1

Filename for **TV Feature**: PHZM feature

The new file is in QuickTime Movie (H.264), MPEG 4, MPEG2 and HDV.

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YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/usda/>

video podcast: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/usda-down-to-earth-video-podcast/id461819504?uo=4>

RSS feed: <http://downtoearth.usda.libsynpro.com/rss>

Please email bob.ellison@usda.gov if you have problems or suggestions.

Also, use this free ftp client if you have problems.

<http://filezilla-project.org/download.php?type+client>

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FEATURE – NEW PLANT HARDINESS ZONE MAP SHOWS TEMPERATURE SHIFTS

INTRO: U-S-D-A's Agricultural Research Service has released a new plant hardiness zone

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map; the first one in twenty two years. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:55)

THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S NEW PLANT HARDINESS ZONE MAP SHOWS CHANGES OF FIVE DEGREES FAHRENHEIT WARMER PER HALF ZONE THROUGH MUCH OF THE NATION SINCE NINETEEN NINETY.

Dr. Peter Bretting, USDA ARS: We see a consistent shift. Especially in the eastern U.S. of about a half zone warmer than in the prior map.

WHY THE CHANGE? DOCTOR BRETTING SAYS THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FACTORS.

Bretting: It's based on more data from more weather recording stations. And they were processed by a special mathematical formula that takes into account features of the landscape, such as mountains, large bodies of water, urban areas, which cause sometimes heat islands. And it was recorded over a longer period, thirty rather than fifteen years.

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THE MAP ALSO SHOWS WHERE PLANTS WOULD BE EXPOSED TO SEVERE WINTER CONDITIONS AND TEMPERATURES AND IS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR GARDENERS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND SCIENTISTS.

Bretting: There are more than eighty million gardeners in the United States and many of them will use this as a reference as will landscape architects, plant breeders. The USDA Risk Management Agency will use these data for certain crop insurance parameters. One application is being able to forecast the spread of weeds or insects that might endanger agriculture.

AND THIS NEW MAP IS MUCH MORE ACCURATE THAN OLDER ONES.

Bretting: The precision is about a half mile square, which is because of the new computerized technology is more precise than the prior maps, which were based on sometimes artistic renditions of where zones began or ended.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO ONLINE TO PLANT HARDINESS DOT A-R-S DOT U-S-D-A DOT GOV. FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE I'M BOB ELLISON