



Special Report:

Frequent and Heavy Summer Rainfall Douses the State

By David Zierden, Florida State Climatologist

The rain this summer has been frequent, widespread, and heavy at times. From South Florida to the Panhandle and Southeast Alabama and even western and central Carolinas, both the last month and the last three months rank among the wettest ever with many stations setting records. Even in the parts that have received a little less, saturated soils and standing water are a huge problem.

Extension specialist William Birdsong in Southeast Alabama reported a laundry list of problems happening from the rain in North Florida and Southeast Alabama. Corn harvest is going slowly because the fields are too wet and getting the equipment in is a problem. Even where the fields are better drained, they are having problems with the tips not filling because of the lack of sunshine.



Cotton growers cannot get into their fields to apply needed nitrogen and other treatments. With so much rain and very shallow root systems, the cotton plants in many fields are struggling to get enough oxygen from the soils.

Because of cool April temperatures followed by the frequent rains, vegetables and melons were late to harvest and of lesser quality.

Standing water is destroying peanut plants in many fields.

Even if things start drying out now, there are going to be substantial losses this year.

North Florida is not the only area experiencing problems with too much water this summer. South Florida is close to experience their wettest April-July on record going back to 1932, according to Geoff Shaughnessy at the South Florida Water Management District. Lake Okeechobee levels are currently very high at 15.78, requiring massive releases to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee canals for flood control as we enter the peak of the tropical cyclone season. Such releases play havoc with the fragile ecosystems in the coastal estuaries.

Some records from around the State:

- Miami Beach - wettest July on record at 18.47 inches
- Fort Lauderdale - wettest July on record at 15.49 inches
- Gainesville - wettest July on record at 16.65 inches, 2nd wettest month ever wettest May-July on record at 27.47 inches
- Key West - wettest May-July on record at 25.18 inches

