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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Irrigation controllers are now widely used to manage landscape irrigation; however, scientifically based information on when to apply water and how much to apply is limited. In California, the landscape industry is huge and there is increased competition among water users. Consequently, managing irrigations to optimize efficient water use is critically important to stretch existing water supplies. Therefore, the MS Excel program LIMP.XLS was written to help landscape professionals and homeowners to calculate  $ET_o$  rates, determine landscape coefficient ( $K_L$ ) values, estimate landscape evapotranspiration ( $ET_L$ ) and determine irrigation schedules. This program not only helps practitioners but it also clarifies what horticulturalists need to research to help to improve urban irrigation management.

Evapotranspiration from landscape vegetation is estimated by using a regional measure of evaporative demand (e.g., reference evapotranspiration or  $ET_o$ ), a microclimate coefficient ( $K_m$ ) to adjust the  $ET_o$  for the “local” microclimate, a vegetation coefficient ( $K_v$ ) that accounts for the difference in  $ET$  between well watered vegetation and the local  $ET_o$ , a density coefficient ( $K_d$ ) that adjusts the  $ET$  estimate for plant density, a stress coefficient ( $K_s$ ) that adjusts for reductions in  $ET$  due to water stress and an evaporation coefficient ( $K_e$ ) that defines a baseline coefficient value. Initially, the coefficient ( $K_w$ ) to estimate  $ET$  of a well-watered vegetated cover is estimated as:

$$K_w = K_m \times K_v \times K_d \quad (1)$$

Then  $K_w$  is multiplied by a stress coefficient ( $K_s$ ) to adjust for reductions in  $ET$  below that of well-watered vegetation. However, the evaporation coefficient serves as a baseline, so the landscape coefficient is calculated as:

$$K_l = K_w \times K_s > K_e \quad (2)$$

Then the landscape evapotranspiration ( $ET_l$ ) for the vegetation in that location is calculated as:

$$ET_l = ET_o \times K_l \quad (3)$$

## 2. MICROCLIMATE COEFFICIENT

In the “Weather” worksheet (Fig. 1), the upper table is used to estimate regional daily  $ET_o$  rates by month and to enter the coefficients used to calculate landscape  $ET$  ( $ET_l$ ). The lower table (Fig. 1) is used to

† The views expressed are those of the author, not the State

input weather data representing the microclimate of the irrigation site to develop monthly microclimate correction factors to estimate the “Local”  $ET_o$  rates. Either daily mean  $ET_o$  rates or weather data are input to estimate “Regional”  $ET_o$  rates in the upper table. Then the LIMP uses a smooth curve fitting technique to estimate daily  $ET_o$  rates during the year from the monthly data. Weather inputs can include the daily mean (1) solar radiation ( $\text{MJ m}^{-2} \text{d}^{-1}$ ), air temperature ( $^\circ\text{C}$ ), wind speed ( $\text{m s}^{-1}$ ), and dew point temperature ( $^\circ\text{C}$ ). The program calculates  $ET_o$  using the Penman-Monteith (PM) equation (Monteith, 1965) as presented in the United Nations FAO Irrigation and Drainage Paper (FAO 56) by Allen et al. (1998). If only temperature data are input, then the Hargreaves-Samani (1982) equation is used.

Figure 1 shows a screenshot of an Excel spreadsheet titled "Weather, Pan Evaporation or ET<sub>o</sub> Data Entry". The spreadsheet is for the year 2004, station name "Tuba City", latitude 38.9, elevation 10.0, and a maximum ET<sub>o</sub> of 0.80. It consists of two main data tables. The upper table, titled "Regional" data, lists monthly weather data (Month, R, T<sub>a</sub>, T<sub>d</sub>, U<sub>w</sub>, T<sub>d</sub>, Pcp, NRD, MC, Reg. ET<sub>o</sub>, Input ET<sub>o</sub>, PM ET<sub>o</sub>, HS ET<sub>o</sub>, GDD, CDD, CDD, CDD, CDD) and calculated coefficients (K<sub>e</sub>, K<sub>w</sub>, K<sub>d</sub>, K<sub>s</sub>, K<sub>l</sub>, K<sub>m</sub>). The lower table, titled "Microclimate" data, lists monthly mean weather data (Month, R, T<sub>a</sub>, T<sub>d</sub>, U<sub>w</sub>, P, NRD, MC, Reg. ET<sub>o</sub>, Input ET<sub>o</sub>, PM ET<sub>o</sub>, HS ET<sub>o</sub>, Calculation) and calculated coefficients (K<sub>e</sub>, K<sub>m</sub>, K<sub>w</sub>, K<sub>d</sub>, K<sub>s</sub>, K<sub>l</sub>). The spreadsheet is for the year 2004, station name "Tuba City", latitude 38.9, elevation 10.0, and a maximum ET<sub>o</sub> of 0.80.

Figure 1. Climate data input worksheet for microclimate, vegetation, density, stress and evaporation coefficient factors.

Monthly climate data representing the “Local” site are input in the lower table of the Weather worksheet and  $ET_o$  is calculated using the PM or HS equations. The ratio of “local” over “regional”  $ET_o$  is computed and displayed in the right-hand column of the lower table. This ratio represents a monthly calibration for microclimate. While the microclimate ( $K_m$ ) factors are shown in the lower table, they are only used by the program if they are copied to the right-hand column of the upper table using “Copy – Paste Special – Values”. A smooth curve fitting procedure is used to estimate daily  $K_m$  values for the year. A sample plot of daily  $K_m$  using data from Figure 1 is shown in Figure 2. If no

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values are input into the right-hand column of the upper table, the default value of  $K_m = 1.0$  is used.

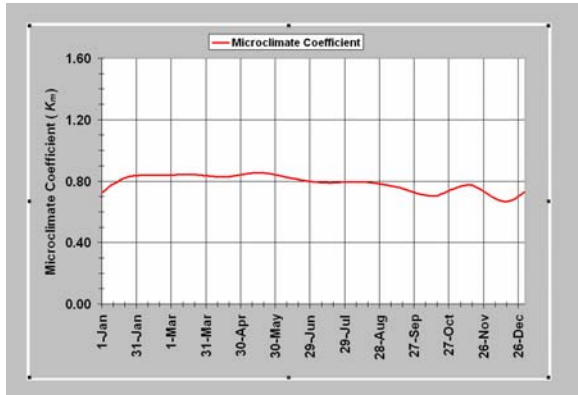


Figure 2. Plot of microclimate coefficient ( $K_m$ ) versus date from data input into Figure 1.

### 3. VEGETATION COEFFICIENT

The vegetation coefficient ( $K_v$ ) is input into the “Weather” worksheet to adjust  $ET$  for plant canopy differences from  $ET_o$  (i.e., the  $ET$  of 0.12 m tall, cool-season grass). The  $K_v$  coefficient represents well-watered vegetation with a full canopy. The  $K_v$  accounts for morphological and physiological differences between the vegetation and the reference surface ( $ET_o$ ). For example, cool-season turfgrass is shorter than the 0.12 m tall, cool-season grass represented by  $ET_o$ , so turfgrass  $ET_i$  is commonly estimated using  $K_v \approx 0.80$ . The  $K_v$  accounts for differences in net radiation, turbulence due to surface roughness, and canopy resistance relative to  $ET_o$ . It is assumed that the plant physiology changes little during the year, so one value is used for  $K_v$  all year. The  $K_v$  value is input near the top right-hand side of the Weather worksheet (Fig. 1).

### 4. DENSITY COEFFICIENT

Sparse canopies have lower  $ET$  than dense canopies of the same vegetation and a density coefficient ( $K_d$ ) is needed for the adjustment. Since there is no known universal correction for landscape vegetation, the following correction for immature deciduous orchards (Fig. 3) is used to estimate  $K_d$ .

$$K_d = \sin\left(\frac{C_G \pi}{70 \cdot 2}\right) \quad (4)$$

where  $C_G$  is the percentage of ground covered by green growing vegetation. It is assumed that this relationship accounts for differences in light interception by canopies with cover less than 70%. For canopies with more than 70% cover,  $K_d = 1.0$ . The percentage ground cover is input by month in the upper table of the weather worksheet, the monthly  $K_d$  values are calculated and curve fitting is used to estimate the daily  $K_d$  values. If the ground cover cells are left blank, the default value  $K_d = 1.0$  is used. The  $K_d$  value is multiplied by the vegetation coefficient ( $K_v$ ) to estimate the landscape coefficient ( $K_l$ )

that accounts for plant density and vegetation differences from the local (i.e., microclimate corrected)  $ET_o$  rate. For example, Figure 4 shows  $K_v \times K_d$  for the data from Figure 1.

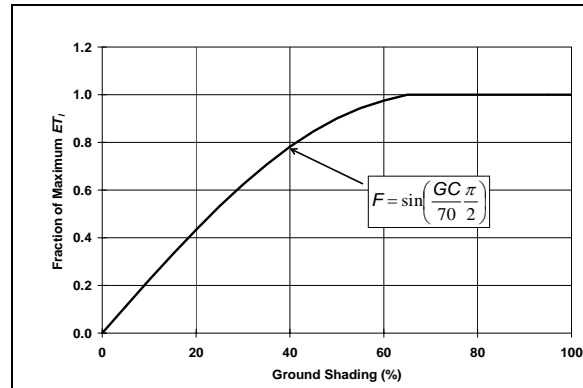


Figure 3. Plot of the density ( $K_d$ ) correction or fraction of maximum  $ET_i$  versus ground cover ( $C_G$ ) percentage.

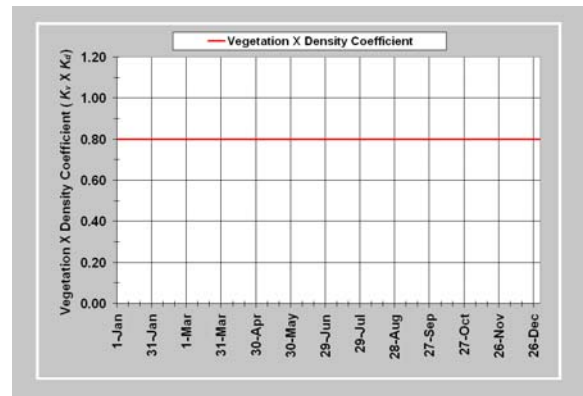


Figure 4. Plot of the product of the vegetation and density coefficient factors from data entered in Figure 1.

### 5. STRESS COEFFICIENT

Monthly stress coefficient ( $K_s$ ) values are input into the upper table of the Weather worksheet (Fig. 1). A coefficient of  $K_s = 0$  would force  $ET_i = 0$  and a  $K_s = 1.0$  implies no reduction in  $ET_i$  due to water stress. After entering the monthly data, daily  $K_s$  values are computed for the entire year using a curve fitting technique. In older literature, it was common to talk about water use differences between vegetation and a “species” coefficient was used to estimate the vegetation  $ET$  from  $ET_o$ . However, in LIMP, the vegetation coefficient ( $K_v$ ) is used to estimate the  $ET$  of vegetation at the maximum  $ET$  rate and the  $K_s$  coefficient is used to estimate the  $ET$  when the vegetation is stressed. For example, warm-season turfgrass has  $ET$  rates at about 75% of cool-season turfgrass during the summer but the  $ET$  rate is near zero during the winter when the grass is dormant. Therefore, reasonable estimates of the stress coefficient ( $K_s$ ) by month were input into the “Weather” worksheet (Fig. 1) and the daily values were estimated and plotted (Fig. 5). Then, the daily landscape coefficient values for

a warm-season turfgrass would be calculated as  $K_f = K_d \times K_s$

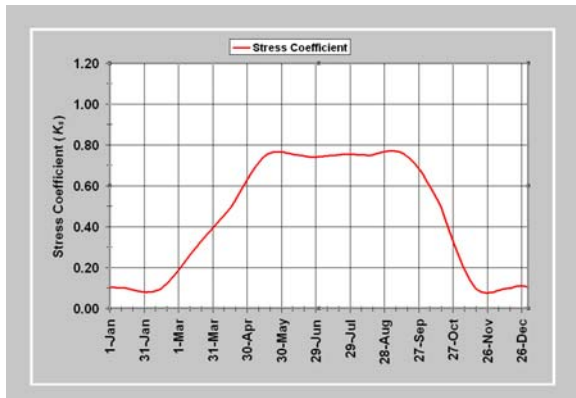


Figure 5. Plot of the daily stress coefficient based on data from Figure 1.

### 6. EVAPORATION COEFFICIENT

Bare soil evaporation is estimated for each day of the year using daily  $ET_o$  estimates and the number-of-rainy-days per month (NRD), which are input into the "Weather" worksheet (Fig. 1). The NRD is used to estimate the rainfall frequency for each month and the results are used with  $ET_o$  to estimate bare soil evaporation ( $E_s$ ) using a 2-stage model. A plot of the evaporation coefficient estimates as a function of  $ET_o$  rate and rainfall frequency (days) is shown in Figure 6. The evaporation coefficient model is explained in Snyder et al. (2000). Then the estimated soil evaporation ( $E_s$ ) is used to calculate a daily mean  $K_e = E_s/ET_o$  value for bare soil for each month. Curve fitting is used to estimate daily  $K_e$  values over the year (Fig. 7). The  $K_f$  values are calculated using Eqs. 1 and 2, but the values must be greater than or equal to  $K_e$  (Fig. 7).

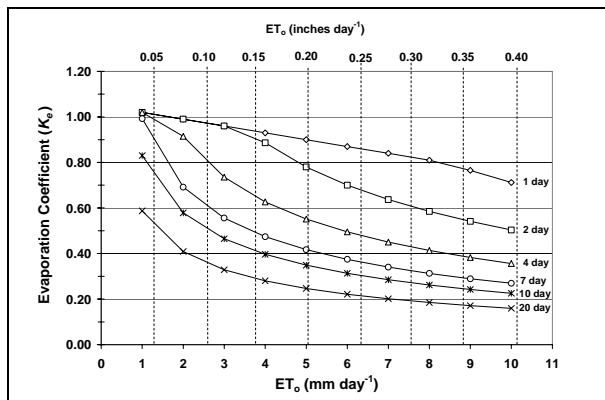


Figure 6. Evaporation ( $K_e$ ) coefficient as a function of  $ET_o$  rate and wetting frequency.

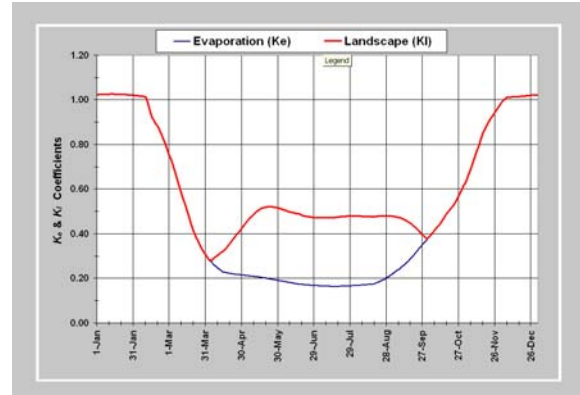


Figure 7. Plot of the landscape coefficient ( $K_l$ ) and evaporation (bare soil) coefficient ( $K_e$ ) based on data from Figure 1.

### 7. OUTPUT & SCHEDULING

Daily values from each of the coefficients are plotted in the charts  $K_m$ \_plot,  $K_d$ \_plot,  $K_s$ \_plot and  $K_l$ \_plot and are listed in worksheets  $K_m$ ,  $K_d$ ,  $K_vK_d$ ,  $K_s$ ,  $K_e$  and  $K_l$ . The landscape ( $K_l$ ) and baseline  $K_e$  coefficients are plotted in Figure 7. The daily landscape coefficient is calculated using Eqs. 1 and 2 and  $ET_i$  is calculated using Eq. 3. The  $ET_o$  and  $ET_i$  rates are plotted in the chart ET (Fig. 8) and the cumulative  $ET_o$  and  $ET_i$  are plotted in the chart CET (Fig. 9).

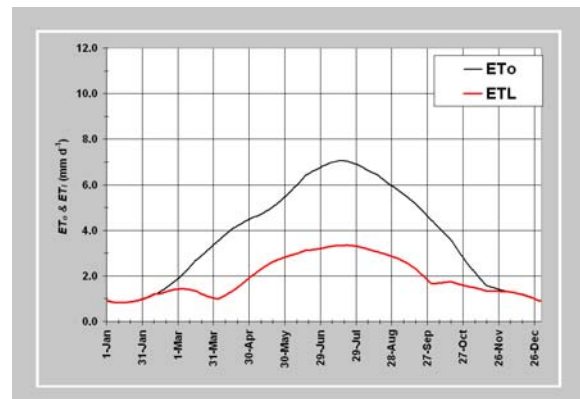


Figure 8. Plot of daily  $ET_o$  and  $ET_i$  using the data from Figure 1.



