

# Public urged to report brown locust sightings

Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Minister, Thoko Didiza, has called on the public to alert the department's nearest district offices when they spot brown locusts.



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Updating the nation on the outbreak of brown locusts (*Locustana pardalina*), Didiza said South Africa has been experiencing this outbreak in the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Western Cape since September 2021.

The outbreak tends to escalate due to the amount of rainfall received, and this has resulted in the development of more locusts.

“This locust outbreak is the highest in decades, as continuous rain is falling in the Karoo and nearby areas. The wind is also playing a role in migrating the swarms to areas where they have never been, such as the Garden Route area in the Western Cape and on the citrus farms of Kirkwood and Patensie in the Eastern Cape.



## Explainer: What's behind the locust swarms damaging crops in southern Africa

Frances Duncan 8 Oct 2020



“It had affected the veld, grazing lands, crops, roads, railway lines and further reported in towns and residential areas,” Didiza said.

The Minister said the department has appointed ground teams to control the locusts in the three provinces. The ground teams include 1 200 controllers and two helicopters that are currently doing aerial spraying, mostly on inaccessible areas and where there are huge locust outbreaks.

Over R80 million spent on locust control programme

To date, the department has spent more than R80 million on the locust control programme. Most of the funds have been spent on the procurement of insecticide, including spray pumps, protective clothing, payments to controllers and aerial spraying.

Didiza said the Western Cape has contributed R5 million to assist in the locust control programme and also procured insecticide, protective clothing and spray pumps.

“The department has established a Joint Operation Committee (JOC) that meets once a week to discuss locust control issues. The participants include the department; the Agricultural Research Council; Free State, Eastern Cape, Western Cape and Northern Cape officials, and organised agriculture.

“To date, the Registrar has assisted by registering new insecticide to be produced for the control of brown locusts, as well as the registration of BAYER’s Decis to be used for aerial spraying, as it was originally used for ground control to alleviate the insecticide shortage for both ground and aerial control,” Didiza said.

Members of the public can also report brown locusts to the department’s officials: Vuyokazi Jongwana on 084 760 8176 and Mulalo Matodzi on 083 326 7773.

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