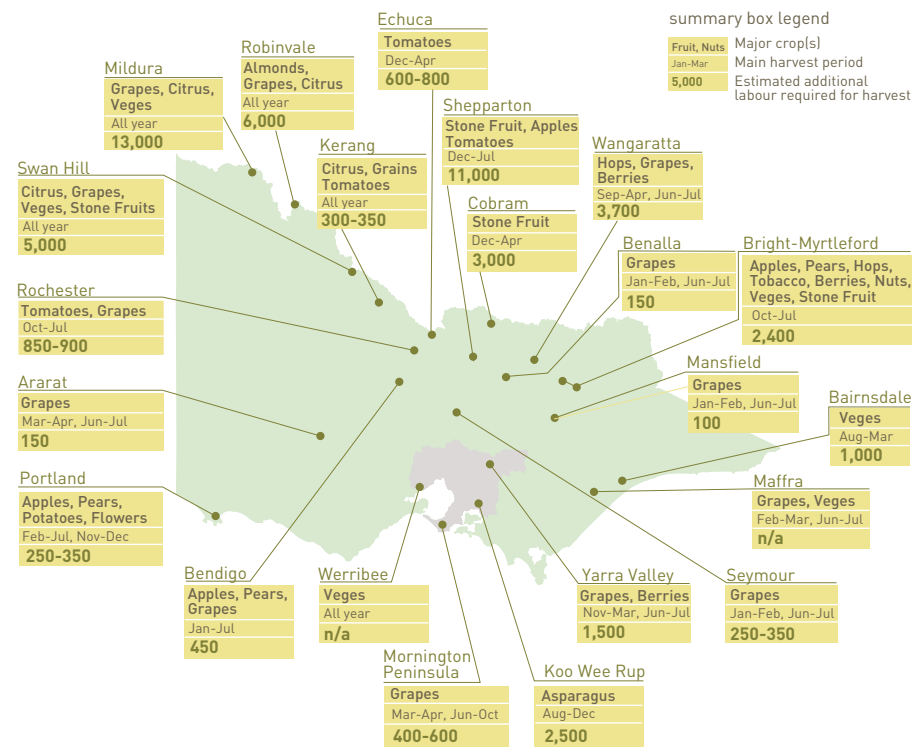


Seasonal labour requirements

Seasonal labour requirements

Skills shortages in regional Victoria may occur during particular seasons, for example in horticultural industries where seasonal harvests are often labour intensive. Related activities such as pruning, weeding, or factory packing can also contribute to seasonal labour demands. It is not only horticulture which requires seasonal labour. Dryland farming, for example, can have seasonal requirements for shearers or harvester operators.

Estimated labour demands for harvest seasons, 2004¹



NOTE: The crops listed above are major crops in the respective regions but do not indicate the complete range of horticultural products produced. The harvest periods and labour requirements indicated above may be subject to change depending upon seasonal climatic variation and changing economic conditions.



Photo courtesy Department of Infrastructure

Recruitment strategies

While most seasonal labour needs are met through local labour pools, overseas travellers, students, itinerant workers, or active retirees may move to these regions for harvest periods. The main challenge for regions with high seasonal labour needs is co-ordinating recruitment. Growers, local economic development agencies, and various levels of government have become involved in the promotion of 'harvest trails' in response to these demands².

Infrastructure needs

The provision of infrastructure such as housing and transport can be difficult where demand varies throughout the year. While many farmers provide on-site quarters, remaining workers place high demands upon local budget accommodation and often compete with tourists for the space. Limited rental accommodation in most regional towns exacerbates such shortages.