

June 1, 2004

COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #2

COTTON SITUATION: Planting is nearing completion in many parts of the state. Dry soil conditions are present and a rain is needed for germination on some fields, especially double cropped cotton following wheat.

INSECT SITUATION: Thrips populations have declined recently; and where moisture is available, seedlings are growing rapidly. Low numbers of tobacco budworm eggs have been reported in southernmost Georgia. Low numbers of tarnished plant bugs have been observed in squaring cotton. Scouts should be monitoring square retention in squaring fields.

Tobacco Budworm: The first generation of tobacco budworm (TBW) typically infests cotton in southernmost Georgia in late May and early June. Some reports of TBW eggs have been received on squaring cotton in the southern tier counties. First generation TBW will normally infest older squaring cotton. Bollgard cottons should provide excellent control of TBW. On non-Bt cotton, selective insecticides should be used to control economic infestations to preserve beneficial insects and avoid selecting for pyrethroid resistant populations.

Plant Bugs: Plant bug populations appear to be low in most areas. However once plants begin squaring, scouts should be observant for plant bugs and monitor square retention. Historically, plant bugs are not widespread pests in Georgia, however some fields require treatment every year to avoid economic damage.



TPB adult.

UGA1858034

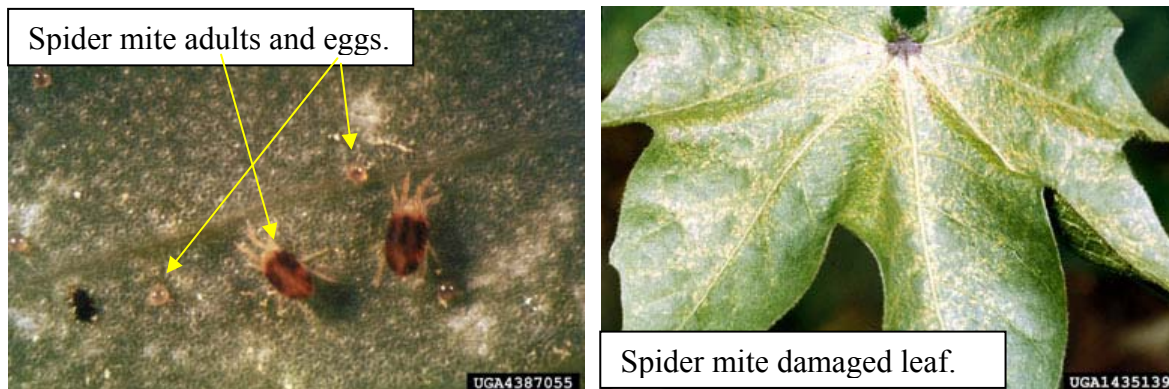


TPB damaged (blasted) square.

Spider Mites: Isolated and spotty infestations of spider mites have been reported in some fields. Spider mite populations in vegetable crops (melons) have been unusually high to date. Spider mites are tiny, and barely visible without magnification (use a hand lens to confirm infestations). Eggs, 6 legged larvae, and 8 legged nymphs and adults will be found on the undersides of leaves. From egg to adult requires about 15 days. Spider mites are typically pests in periods of hot, dry weather. Mites move into cotton from weedy areas in and around the field especially when weed hosts die back.

Initial infestations (as observed now) will be spotty but can gradually increase in severity. Mites feed by sucking plant juices from the undersides of leaves. Mite damage initially appears as small yellow to red spots near the leaf veins. As the population increases, webbing may also be present. Heavy mite infestations may cause some leaf drop.

Scouting for Spider Mites: As you walk through the cotton field, observe the foliage for characteristic signs of mite feeding. If chlorotic (yellow or red spots) are noticed on the upper surface of the leaves, examine the underside of the leaf with a had lens for the presence of mites. In subsequent scouting reports, track the spread of mite infestations. If mites are spreading from initial infestation, spot treatment may be an option.



Images from www.ipmimages.org

Thrips: Thrips populations have declined compared with late April and early May and seedlings are growing rapidly where moisture is available. Drought conditions are making it difficult for plants to uptake systemic insecticides and this may result in some injury. Continue to monitor plants with less than 5 true leaves for thrips and injury.

Scout Schools: The annual cotton scout school will be held in Tifton on Monday June 14, 2004. As in years prior, pre-registration and a \$7.00 registration fee is required. Additional cotton scout schools are also planned at other locations. The dates, location, and contact for each are listed below.

June 14, 2004	RDC, Tifton- <i>Debbie Rutland</i> (229/386-3424), pre-registration required
June 15, 2004	Jeff Davis Co., Hazelhurst- <i>Tim Varnedore</i> (912/375-6648)
June 22, 2004	SE GA Res.& Ed. Center, Midville- <i>Richard McDaniel</i> (706/554-2119)

INSECT UPDATES: Check the **Cotton Insect Hotline (1-800-851-2847)** for updates on current insect conditions. The Cotton Pest Management Newsletter is also posted on the UGA Cotton Homepage at: <http://www.griffin.peachnet.edu/caes/cotton/>

Sincerely,

Phillip Roberts
Extension Entomologist