



The University of Georgia  
**Cooperative Extension**  
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

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***COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #3***

**COTTON SITUATION:** The Georgia Weekly Crop Progress and Condition Report for the week ending June 14<sup>th</sup> listed the crop as 96 percent planted which is the same as the 5 year average. Eleven percent of the cotton was squaring which is behind the 5 year average of 22 percent. Producers will be finishing up cotton planting in the coming days. This past week has been HOT.

**INSECT SITUATION:** Thrips have posed only minor problems recently; seedlings are developing quickly and thrips populations are generally low. Aphids have been reported in several counties. We have observed spider mites in some field plots in Tifton.

**Thrips:** Thrips damage is generally low on later planted cotton. Seedlings are growing vigorously, thrips numbers are down, and systemic insecticides used at planting are typically providing good control. However, growers should continue to scout fields for thrips and damage. Excessive thrips injury will delay maturity which could be problematic on a late planted crop. Seedlings are most vulnerable to thrips feeding during early stages of development (1-2 leaf) and become more tolerant of feeding as they develop. Once seedlings reach the 5 leaf stage and are growing vigorously, it is rare to see an economic response from a foliar spray.

**Spider Mites:** In a matter of weeks, we went from cool and wet to hot and dry. Spider mites thrive in hot and dry conditions, especially in fields in which beneficial insects have been disrupted with broad spectrum insecticides. We actually had to spray spider mites in a cotton trial in Tifton this week. The trial included treatments which utilized multiple foliar thrips sprays for thrips control. Treatments included 1, 2, 3, 4, and up to 5 foliar sprays for thrips. Any guesses on which treatments the spider mite infestations were the greatest?

Spider mites infest the underside of leaves and a hand lens will be needed to confirm their presence. Early injury symptoms may be recognized by stipling and yellowish areas, spots on the upper leaf surface. These early symptoms of injury are often observed in folds of the leaf and/or near the leaf veins. If foliar symptoms are observed, be sure to check for the presence of live mites on the underside of the leaf. Spider mite infestations are often observed near field borders or light poles in fields (i.e. mites spread from areas with infested weeds).



**Aphids:** Aphids have been reported from several counties and we typically observe isolated aphid infestations in many fields this time of year. During most years aphids build to high numbers and populations eventually crash due to a naturally occurring fungus. This fungal epizootic typically occurs in late June or early July depending upon location. In most years only a small percentage of fields are treated for aphids. Decision to treat an aphid infestation is a judgment call. One must first consider if the fungal epizootic is near. Is there any indication of the fungus (ie. Gray fuzzy aphid cadavers)? Once numerous gray fuzzy aphid cadavers are observed in a field we would expect the aphid population to crash due to the fungus in about a week. Aphids add stress to plants by feeding on and removing plant juices. Heavy accumulations of honeydew, yellowing terminals, and plant stunting should be considered prior to treating aphids.

Some have expressed concern about aphids on late planted cotton. As we mentioned earlier aphids are stress inducing pests and high populations on seedling cotton could slow maturity. However, at-plant insecticides (Temik, Cruiser, and Gaucho) are active on aphids and should provide some control for a couple of weeks. Scout and treat on an as needed basis



Heavily infested aphid plants. The image on the bottom right is grayish fuzzy aphids which were killed by the naturally occurring fungus.

**INSECT UPDATES:** Check the **Cotton Insect Hotline (1-800-851-2847)** for updates on current insect conditions. The Cotton Pest Management Newsletter and additional cotton production information is also posted on the UGA Cotton Homepage at: <http://www.ugacotton.com>

Sincerely,

Phillip Roberts  
Extension Entomologist

