



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

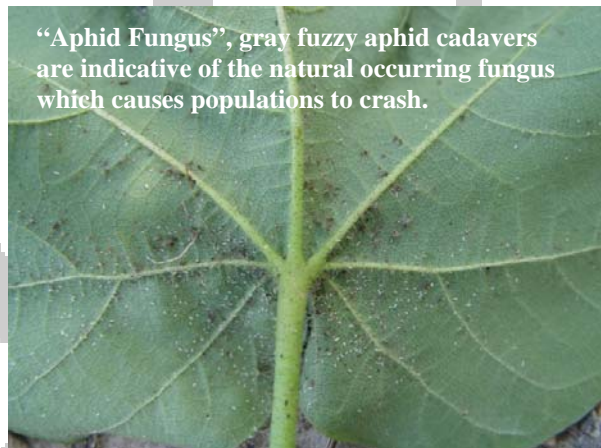
July 2, 2012

***COTTON PEST MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER #2***

**COTTON SITUATION:** The weekly Georgia Crop Progress & Condition Report for the week ending July 1<sup>st</sup> listed the crop as 62 percent squaring and 14 percent setting bolls; crop conditions were rated 41 percent fair, 49 percent good, and 7 percent excellent.

**INSECT SITUATION:** The naturally occurring aphid fungus which causes aphid infestations to crash was recently reported in southwest Georgia. Aphid populations have been variable and sporadic, some areas still have very few aphids whereas some fields have had moderate to high numbers for the past 10-14 days. April planted cotton is setting bolls and stink bug scouting should be a priority in these fields; we received a report today of over 20 percent boll injury in an early planted field. Pheromone trap captures for both tobacco budworm and corn earworm in Tifton have been low to date.

**Aphids:** Aphid infestations are highly variable across the state. High populations (some fields have been treated) are present in some areas whereas aphids remain relatively low in others. Tim Moore (CEC Miller County) and Scott Utley (CEC Turner County) both reported seeing the naturally occurring aphid fungus which will cause aphid infestations to crash in the last week. We usually see the fungus in fields where relatively high populations of aphids are present. If you have fields with high aphid populations, be sure to scout for gray fuzzy aphid cadavers which are indicative of the naturally occurring fungus. Once the fungus is detected in a field, we would expect aphids to crash in about a week. In areas where aphid numbers are still low, expect populations to build in the coming weeks and then crash due to the fungus.



The decision to treat aphids is a judgment call. Although effective insecticides are available for aphid control, field trials conducted in Georgia have not demonstrated a consistent yield response to treatment.

**Tarnished Plant Bugs:** A few areas have reported treatable populations of tarnished plant bugs. Although plant bugs are a rare and sporadic pest of Georgia cotton, failure to detect economic infestations can result in yield loss and delays in maturity. Be sure to monitor square retention and be observant for plant bugs when walking fields. Sprays should only be applied when

needed. Treatment is recommended if plants are retaining less than 80 percent of pinhead squares and numerous plant bugs are observed. It is a good habit to periodically pull plants and monitor first position square retention on the whole plant. Our goal is to retain at least 80 percent of all first position squares at first bloom. We have had a few questions on thresholds when using 15 inch diameter sweep nets to sample plant bugs. Entomologists in the Mid-South have conducted extensive field trials evaluating thresholds for plant bugs during recent years. Below are thresholds recommended in Mississippi for plant bugs:

***First 2 weeks of squaring:***

**Drop Cloth:** 1 plant bug/6 row ft

**Sweep net:** 8 bugs/100 sweeps

***Third week of squaring through bloom:***

**Drop cloth:** 3 bugs/6 row ft

**Sweep net:** 15 bugs/100 sweeps

**Stink Bugs:** Most April planted cotton is setting bolls. Scouts should be observant for stink bugs while walking fields and monitoring medium sized bolls for stink bug feeding injury. ***The boll injury threshold should be adjusted up or down based on the number of susceptible bolls present. Use a 10-15% boll injury threshold during weeks 3-5 of bloom (numerous susceptible bolls present), 20% during weeks 2 and 6, and 30%+ during weeks 7(+ of bloom (fewer susceptible bolls present). Detection of 1 stink bug per 6 row feet would also justify treatment.*** Bolls approximately the diameter of a quarter should be sampled and examined for internal damage. Internal damage is defined as warts or callous growths on the inner surface of the boll and/or stained lint. During the first week to ten days of bloom, bolls the diameter of a quarter are not present and the largest bolls available should be evaluated. Stink bugs prefer to feed on medium sized bolls but may feed on small bolls when that is all that is available. Small bolls (less than 10 days of age) which are damaged may be aborted. Small bolls which shed due to stink bug damage will often have “jelly-like” areas inside the boll; if you notice small boll shed examine them closely.

**PEST PATROL HOTLINE:** Check the Pest Patrol Hotline (**1-877-285-8525**) for updates on current insect conditions. Select #1 for updates from the Southern Region, then #3 for the Southeast, and then #4 to hear the Georgia update. More information, including sign up for text message alerts when new updates are posted, can be found at [www.SyngentaPestPatrol.com](http://www.SyngentaPestPatrol.com). 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

Putting knowledge to work

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