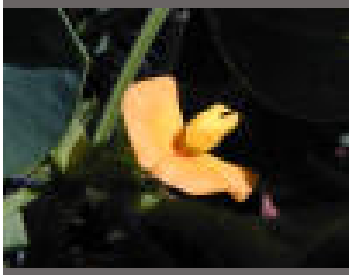
Volume 3, Issue 7

August 27, 2009



TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

Peanut Progress

Be On the Look Out For Spider Mites In Peanut

Scott Russell Extension Agent – IPM, Terry & Yoakum Counties

sarussel@tamu.edu
806-637-4060

Hot, dry weather conditions are favorable for spider mites in a variety of crops. We are currently seeing spider mite infestations in peanuts. Most of these are small, isolated infestations at the current time, but these pests are ready to move across the field as prolonged heat and drought continue. Infestations often start near field margins or weedy areas. Spider mites tend to recur in the fields where there is a history of their infestation.

Spider mites are tiny relatives of ticks. Immature spider mites have three pairs of legs while adults have four pairs of legs. There are several species which can infest Texas peanuts. Spider mites have piercing and sucking mouth parts, kind of like a drinking straw. They feed by sucking the cell contents out of plants cells, which results in a "bleaching" or speckled appearance of the foliage. Mites usually inhabit the underside of leaves, but will move to the upper surface as the population's size increases. Usually these pests are kept in check by natural enemies; however their populations can out pace predators under favorable conditions.

Spider mite damage in the field resembles wilting, droughty plants from a distance. When you examine the foliage more closely, you find the speckling of the leaves which results from their feed. Extensive feeding results in defoliation, a lack of pod filling and death of the peanut vines. These mites are 0.4 to 0.5 mm in size, so a hand lens is helpful when confirming their presence.

Sulfur compounds applied for foliar diseases may suppress spider mite numbers; however sulfur is not very effective when the population reaches an economically damaging level. Registered products for controlling spider mites in peanuts include Danitol, Comite and Omite. For rates of each product consult the current product label. Thorough coverage of the canopy is essential to control an infestation.

Spider mites are tiny relatives of ticks. Look on the underside of leaves for the actual mites. Note the speckling of the leaf caused by the feeding of these mites.

Heavy infestations of spider mites are capable of defoliating a peanut crop. If chemical treatment is required one must insure thorough coverage of the foliage.

TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

P.O. Box 2159
11708 Highway 70 South
Vernon, TX 76385

Phone: 940-552-9941
Fax: 940-553-4657
E-mail: tbaughma@ag.tamu.edu

Improving Lives. Improving Texas.

Newsletter is sponsored by:

Texas Peanut Producers Board

Were on the web:
http:peanut.tamu.edu