

Plains Pest Management News

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Early Edition

Cotton

About half our IPM program fields are now squaring. An early planted field, observed on June 28 had an average of ten squares per plant and five to six fruiting branches. The first fruiting branch was consistently at node eight. First position square loss was common at positions eight, nine and ten. This square loss was probably not due to fleahopper infestations, but to high winds two weeks ago.

First position squares in the terminal are healthy and percent square set in this area of the plant is very good. We are now finding cotton fleahopper nymphs and adults, but counts remain very low and damage is light.

Corn

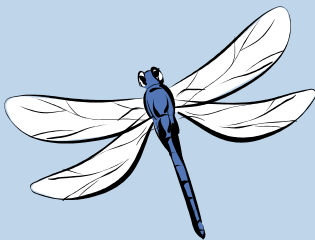
Corn ranges from knee high to 60 inches tall. Some corn has now been abandoned to conserve water for cotton irrigation. These fields will be cut and sold for hay.

Banks grass mites have been found in nearly all corn fields inspected. Infestations range from a few scattered colonies found to five percent damage on the lower leaves. This week a few two spotted spider mite colonies have been observed, but the Banks grass mite is the dominate species.

Two key predators have been observed in corn where mites have been established for two to three weeks. The first is the six-spotted thrips (*Scolothrips sexmaculatus*) which is an excellent mite predator. It is 1/15 inch and each wing has three small brown to gray spots, thus the name is six-spotted thrips.

It is reported that the larvae of this thrips eats about ten mites eggs per day and the adult eats up to sixty mite eggs per day. This predator has been known to completely eliminate Banks grass mite infestations from corn.

The second key predator observed this week feed in spider mite colonies was the spider mite destroyer lady beetle (*stethorus punctillum*). Adults are a round shape & shiny black in color. They are about 1.5 mm in length. The larvae are a dark gray color with small spines or hairs protruding from the body. Larvae and adults consume from 6 to 75 mites per day. This predator has also been observed to eliminate Banks grass mite infestations from corn. Even though both the predators have been found it does not mean that mites will not resurge again after corn reaches the reproductive stage.



Texas AgriLife Extension Service

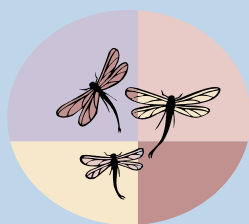
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INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT IN HALE & SWISHER COUNTIES