

UPPER COAST CROP IMPROVEMENT NEWSLETTER

Matagorda

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TPMA Website

The Upper Coast Crop Improvement newsletter and other Extension IPM Program newsletters from across the state can be viewed at the Texas Pest Management Association website at www.tpma.org.

Upper Coast IPM Program Sponsors

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Cotton Insect Situation

During the past week (5/2-5/6), growth stages of cotton in the Tri-County area of Wharton, Matagorda, and Jackson Counties ranged from 1-2 true leaf stage to first square.

Thrips numbers increased in numbers during the past week. Control may be justified when the average number of thrips counted per plant is equal to the number of true leaves present at the time of inspection. Our seed and in-furrow insecticide treatments usually give us good control for about 28 to 35 days under good growing conditions. Under warm growing conditions, this is usually ample time for the cotton plant to

reach the five true leaf stage or first square when it is no longer as vulnerable to thrips pressure.

However, during the past two weeks growing conditions have been cooler than normal (see attached colored chart on progression of degree days after planting) and dry as well. This has prevented most cotton fields from reaching the first square stage in 30 to 35 days and systemic insecticide treatments applied at planting are beginning to lose their effectiveness on thrips control. If cooler than normal conditions persist, thrips numbers could increase. Under these cool temperature conditions, foliar insecticide treatments may be warranted through the five to six true leaf stage or first square when thrips number one per true leaf or more.

Loopers continue to be found in cotton fields. Numbers for this time of year are higher compared to the past several years. Insecticide treatment is not justified until 10-20% of the plants examined contain one-half inch long larvae.

Boll Weevil Trap Counts

Enclosed (Table 1) you will find a seven year comparison of the boll weevil trap counts by month. This information is based on a 20-mile trap line which has been operated by the Texas Cooperative Extension since April of 1998. Traps are located between El Campo and Hillje on farm to market highway 1162, county roads 442, 422, 409, and 426. When you study the numbers in the table, keep in mind that the BWEP began in July of 2002.

Uniform Stacked Cotton Variety Trials

During the month of April, eleven uniform stacked cotton variety trials were planted with cotton producers along the Gulf Coast, Brazos Bottom, and in the Blacklands of Texas.

Eight varieties were planted and replicated three times in a randomized complete block design in large field plots at all

eleven locations. These trials are located in the following counties: Burleson (2), Colorado, Calhoun, Fort Bend, Jackson, Matagorda, Refugio, San Patricio, Wharton, and Williamson.

Varieties planted at all eleven locations included DPL 444BG/RR, DPL 445BG/RR, DPL 455BG/RR, ST 5599BR, ST 457BR, FM 800B2R, FM 960B2R, and PHY 470WR.

Rainfall

Below are 2004 and 2005 rainfall comparisons for the first four months of the year. Rainfall totals were obtained from the Wharton County crop weather station located near Crescent at Rancho Grande farms.

Table 2. 2004 and 2005 rainfall amounts, Rancho Grande Farms, Wharton County.

	2005	2004
January	1.68	3.17
February	4.37	3.53
March	3.99	2.56
April	1.26	4.62
Total	11.30	13.88

Source: Wharton County crop weather station – (cwp.tamu.edu)

Did You Know

It is usually with a great deal of hesitation that human beings share their habitats with insects. Because we have no choice in the matter, we have adjusted our existence because of insects, and many customs and lifestyles reflect the intimacy of our relationship with them.

Insects have lived unhampered by human contrivances for most of their existence on earth. They were probably the first small animals to inhabit the land with complete success, having evolved from creatures that probably looked like our present day earthworms.

The land had been colonized by low-growing plants some 100 million years before insects became prominent and had witnessed a succession of vegetative changes that ultimately resulted in the great coal forests. It was during this time, the Carboniferous Period (about 350 million years ago), when amphibians and reptiles flourished that insects gained a firm foothold on the land. During this early period, change in insect form and degree of species diversity accelerated rapidly. Some insects then resembled large dragonflies, gigantic forms wingspans as wide as 29 inches (Entomology and Pest Management, third edition).