NC STATE EXTENSION

Determining Peanut Pod Maturity and Estimating the Optimal Digging Date

Using Pod Mesocarp Color for Digging Virginia Market Type Peanut

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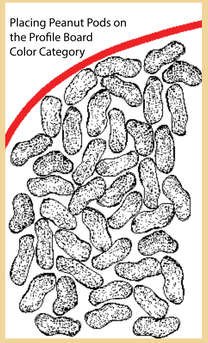
Using the Peanut Profile Board

Gather 150 harvestable pods from each field or from each variety within a field, collecting pods from four or five locations. Keep pods in water until pod blasting. Use a pressure washer equipped with a turbo nozzle to remove the outer hull and expose the mesocarp color layer. Your county Extension agent can assist with this procedure.

Using the images of pods at the top of each column, place pods on the profile board under the appropriate mesocarp color category. Lay pods loosely as shown here.

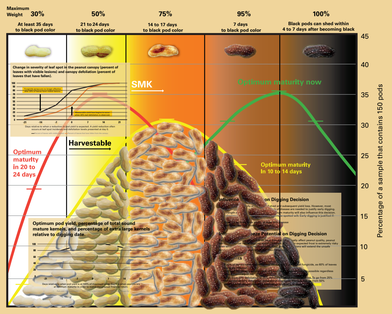


Lay pods on the chart and place them loosely within the appropriate mesocarp color category from the bottom line of the category upward. The percentage value on the right-hand side of the chart can be used to compare percentages of pods among color categories. In most cases samples will resemble a bell-shaped curve. However, this occurs only when rainfall and temperatures promote predictable maturation. When weather conditions are unfavorable or when peanuts are damaged by pesticides, samples may not be uniformly distributed. This makes predicting the optimum digging date more difficult.

Use the percentage value on the right-hand side of the chart to determine if peanuts are at optimum maturity. When the percentages of both brown and black pods are at least 30 to 35%, peanuts are at optimum maturity.

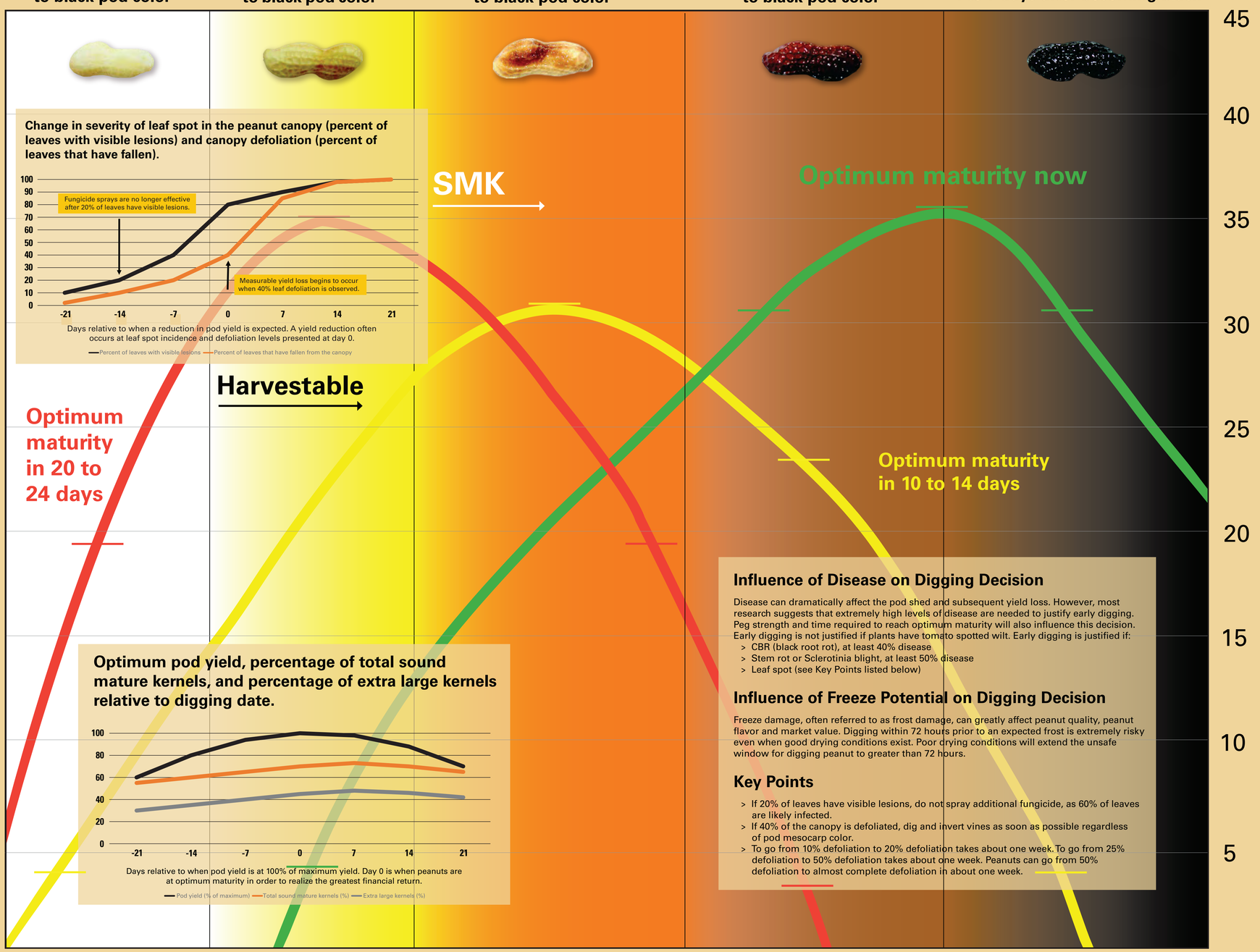
The darker the mesocarp color, the more mature the peanut pod. Darker pods are heavier, will shrink less and will grade better than pods with a lighter mesocarp color.

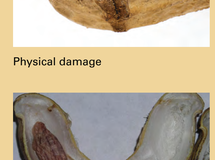
Peanuts in the image below placed on a peanut profile board will reach optimum maturity in 10 to 14 days.



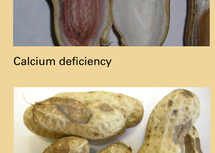
Sampling two or three times during the fall gives the best indication of the rate of peanut maturity. This is particularly important when examining pods that are black. These pods will eventually be lost and sampling only once does not give you enough information to determine when pods in the black category are likely to be lost. Using heat unit accumulations also can help you know when to begin determining maturity.

Note that when early morning temperatures are in high 40° F range for two days, pod maturation may not develop further unless there is a prolonged and unseasonal warming period.





Southern corn rootworm damage



Cutworm damage

Wireworm damage

Freeze damage

Physical damage

Calcium deficiency

Lesions caused by Rhizoctonia

Sclerotinia blight stem shredding and bleaching

Spider mites

Pod symptoms from southern stem rot

Drought

Late leaf spot

Peanut root-knot nematode

Rhizoctonia

Black root rot (CBR)

Black root rot (CBR)