

The peanut crop in the Virginia-Carolina region is approximately 85% planted and will be over 90% planted by the Memorial Day weekend. Some areas of the region received high rainfall amounts during the week of May 13 that have limited field activities but conditions have been excellent during the week of May 20 across the region. Peanuts in many fields are at the cracking stage and many fields have complete emergence. Peanuts planted in late April and the first week of May have good stands and peanuts are growing well. Temperatures are typical for May across the Virginia-Carolina region. This is a departure from 2023 when May and early June experienced record-breaking cool temperatures. Rain is forecasted for the weekend of May 25-26 and could delay final plantings, although the expectation the entire crop will be planted by June 1. While the optimum planting date is considered to be around the middle of May, planting sometime in the month of May will result in optimum yields in most years.

Growers are now dealing with weed escapes that have occurred. Injury of peanuts from herbicides applied immediately after planting has been reported. Each year some peanuts experience injury from the herbicide flumioxazin (most popular trade name is Valor SX) when peanuts are planted into relatively dry soils and rainfall occurs at the time peanuts are beginning to emerge. The injury results when herbicide and soil are splashed onto small, emerging seedlings. This has been the case across a significant number of fields due to recent weather patterns relative to peanut planting dates and subsequent emergence. This injury is transient and yield in the vast majority of cases is not adversely affected. This herbicide, when applied with complement herbicides is essential for adequate control of many of the problematic weeds in peanuts, especially Palmer amaranth. Some fields have significant populations of yellow nutsedge. It is not uncommon when field conditions are relatively dry at planting for yellow and purple nutsedge to become established.

Growers are also looking closely at how well in-furrow, systemic insecticides control thrips. Resistance in thrips populations across the upper V-C region to imidacloprid is present and growers will need to apply acephate or other insecticides to control this pest if performance of in-furrow insecticides is inadequate. Other systemic insecticides can be used and are effective. This is the case in South Carolina where incidence of tomato spotted wilt is relatively high compared with North Carolina and Virginia. Phorate is often the insecticide of choice because it suppresses both thrips and tomato spotted wilt virus, the pathogen that is transmitted by thrips.

There are no other major pests that growers are forced to manage other than weeds and thrips during the first month of the season. Fungicide seed treatments and in some cases use of in-furrow fungicides have been used to protect peanuts seedlings from diseases in order to ensure adequate peanut stands. Peanuts have been emerging approximately 10 days after planting when this operation was done in early to mid-May. Peanuts planted the week of May 20 and thereafter will emerge in about one week.

Yield potential for peanut in the region is currently set at 4,480 kg/ha (4,100 lbs/acre). The majority of plantings in North Carolina and Virginia are large-seeded Virginia

market types (95%) that target the in-shell and gourmet peanut markets. In South Carolina, runner market types will be planted on approximately two-thirds of hectares with the balance in Virginia market types.

Peanut plants in a field near Tarboro, North Carolina on May 20. Note the presence of yellow nutsedge in the second image.









Peanuts at the cracking stage in a field near Rocky Mount in North Carolina.





Peanut plants that have recently emerged in a field near Lewiston-Woodville, North Carolina.



Peanut seedling with injury caused by flumioxazin applied immediately after planting. This injury is transient and will not negatively impact yield.

