Pest Alert—Spider Mites Attacking Soybean

The Extension service has confirmed two-spotted spider mites in area fields. Growers should scout their fields as this pest can be very damaging during hot dry conditions. Growers should examine areas adjacent to water-ways and field borders for circular areas that are caused from mite damage.

Growers should look at field symptoms that might be caused from dry conditions to determine if mites are causing the damage. Mite populations may double every 5-7 days under drought conditions.

Growers that have applied a pyrethroid insecticide early season to soybeans should immediately scout fields. These insecticides by themselves will cause mites to flare increasing the problem.

Spider mites are best controlled in soybeans by using an organophosphate such as dimethoate or Lorsban®, or its generic equivalent. Growers can add a pyrethroid insecticide with this to control other insects and lengthen control.

Spider mites feed on the underside of the soybean leaves so having proper amount of water carrier is important for coverage and improves control. Twenty gallon of water per acre would be best.

This pest can cause severe damage. Plant damage of the top-side of the soybean leaf will look like speckling. Plants will be stunted and under severe mite damage turn brown. When you see damage field areas, the mites have moved to other plants that are green and not showing symptoms.

Mites are extremely hard to see and growers should use a 20X hand lens to see mites. Also, shake infested leaves over white paper and watch for movement. The mites will look like very small specks of dirt on the white paper. They are the size of 1/60 of an inch.

This pest tends to move downwind. It is necessary to scout the entire field for mites.

Below: Injury to soybean plants and damage across a field.
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If you would like to be added to our electronic mailing list, please contact Charmaine Flint, Holt County Secretary at 660-446-3724.

Information contained in this newsletter is intended for use in Northwest Missouri and may need to be adapted to other locations. We ask that you credit University of Missouri Extension if you use this information.

Top left: Underside of leaf with mites feeding.
Top right: Top of leaf showing speckling.
Left: Circular area affected with mites.
Right: Severe damage causing soybeans to be defoliated and die.

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