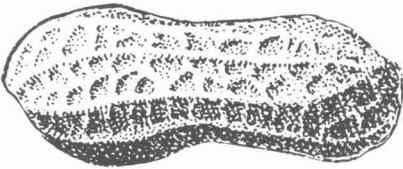


# Managing Insects on Texas Peanuts



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TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE  
THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
Daniel C. Pfannstiel, Director, College Station, Texas

# SUGGESTIONS FOR MANAGING INSECTS ON TEXAS PEANUTS

Clifford E. Hoelscher and David S. Moore  
Area and County Extension Entomologists  
The Texas A&M University System

Suggestions in this publication are based on results of continuing research conducted throughout the state by the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. Research results for some of the minor peanut pests from other peanut-producing states have been evaluated carefully and utilized in developing these suggestions. A committee of state and federal research personnel, Texas Agricultural Extension Service specialists and Texas Department of Agriculture personnel meets annually to review research results, evaluate field experiences and develop suggestions for practical, environmentally safe and profitable insect control practices for Texas peanut producers.

Many insect and mite species attack peanuts. Variations in weather and cultural practices cause insect problems to fluctuate from one season to the next. Because insect populations vary and economic levels of damage to peanuts have not been fully determined, producers should thoroughly analyze their field situations before beginning insecticide applications. Land potentials, anticipated yield, stage of plant development, moisture conditions and insect species are important factors to consider before applying insecticides. Knowing when *not* to make an application often is as important as knowing when to make one, especially since agricultural producers face an ever-decreasing insecticide arsenal and more restrictions on pesticide use. To achieve effective, economical insect control, insecticide applications must be based on pest populations as determined by field inspections. Use chemicals only if economically damaging numbers of insects develop. In addition to the wise use of chemicals, a sound insect program also includes maximum use of natural and cultural control methods. Natural populations of parasites and predators should be utilized and protected. Immediate results and long-range consequences of insecticide applications require careful consideration if profitable, effective insect control programs are to be implemented.

## INSECT PESTS

### Lesser Cornstalk Borer

The lesser cornstalk borer is the major insect pest of Texas peanuts. This small, slender larva is primarily a subterranean feeder, living beneath the soil surface in silken tubes. Late-planted peanuts are particularly susceptible to damage in the seedling stage, which often results in reduced plant stands. Worms or larvae injure mature plants by feeding on pegs, pods, stems and roots. Pegs are cut off below the ground surface and the developing nuts are hollowed out. Stems and roots are scarred and may be girdled.

This insect usually is more harmful to peanuts grown under dryland conditions and during drought years. Prolonged rainfall and irrigation in certain fields contribute to larval mortality. Proper timing of irrigation and the amount of water applied at each irrigation may help reduce larval populations. Keeping land free of volunteer peanuts, weeds and grasses several weeks before planting will help reduce pest populations during early season.

To achieve effective control and prevent over-use of insecticides, producers should be thoroughly familiar with lesser cornstalk borer population levels in their fields. Thorough, frequent field checks are necessary to determine these levels. In this way, insecticide applications can be timed precisely and unnecessary treatments avoided. If the producer is unable to make field checks regularly, he should employ competent commercial field scouts for the season.

#### How to Make Counts

Producers should begin field checks at plant emergence and continue them at least once a week. Field check locations should be selected at random, with one location for each 5 acres in a field and a minimum of five sample sites in any field. Sample sites should not be close to field borders. A minimum of five plants should be examined at each sample site. As the number of locations and plants inspected increases, the estimated infestation level becomes more accurate. The base of the plant just below the soil surface should be inspected for feeding damage, larval tubes and larvae. Later in the season, pegs and peanuts also should be examined. To obtain a percent infestation figure, divide the total number of plants inspected into the number of infested plants found. Do not derive an infestation level from dead larvae or plant damage. See the following table and example.

Number of infested plants	Number of plants examined			
	25	33	50	100
	Percent Infestation			
1	4	3	2	1
2	8	6	4	2
3	12	9	6	3
4	16	12	8	4
5	20	15	10	5
6		18	12	6
7			14	7
8			16	8
9			18	9
10				10

Example:

If there were five infested plants (left column) in a total of 50 plants examined (upper row), there would be a 10 percent infestation. If several larvae are found on a single plant, it is still counted as *one* infested plant.

#### When to Begin Chemical Control

Recent research indicates that yield or quality losses do not occur until certain infestation levels are reached. After initial pegging, irrigated peanuts should be treated when 15 percent or more of the plants are infested with lesser cornstalk borer larvae. In dryland, begin treatment when 10 percent or more of the plants are infested. However, before initial pegging, infestation levels of more than 5 percent in dryland and more than 10 percent in irrigated peanuts will require treatment. Treatment of lower level infestations probably would not be profitable for several reasons. In addition to losing the cost of the insecticide, the producer could destroy beneficial insects, thus predisposing peanuts to certain foliage feeders and spider mites. Apply sprays to dryland fields in the morning hours during hot, dry weather. Sprays may volatilize if soil temperatures are hot.

Economic thresholds for the lesser cornstalk borer in both dryland and irrigated peanuts are as follows:

	Dryland	Irrigated
Before initial pegging	5%	10%
After initial pegging	10%	15%

### Thrips

Thrips feed primarily in terminal leaf clusters between folds of young leaflets by rasping the tender leaf surface and sucking up plant juices. This results in dwarfing and a malformation of leaves and causes a condition called "pouts." Feeding usually occurs during the first month after plant emergence.

Spraying or granular applications of insecticides at planting time effectively controls this insect but does not generally increase yields. Effective control of thrips populations as high as 30 to 40 thrips per terminal has not increased yields in the West Cross Timbers area. Yield increases following insecticide applications depend on the environmental conditions and the stage of plant growth when thrips damage occurs.

### Foliage-Feeding Insects

Foliage-feeding insects may cause considerable damage to peanuts during certain times of the growing season. This group includes the corn earworm or cotton bollworm, red-necked peanut worm, armyworm, salt marsh caterpillar and grasshopper. Research on control of foliage-feeding pests indicates that the peanut plant is extremely tolerant to foliage loss. Extensive feeding damage may lower yields in both dryland and irrigated fields. These secondary insect pests can become economically important if unwarranted insecticide use removes natural populations of beneficial insects that provide effective biological control. For this reason, frequent field inspections should be made before applying insecticides to determine if economically damaging numbers of injurious insects are present. Should chemical control measures become necessary, apply when insects are in the first instars of development. The plant is most susceptible to insect foliage damage from 60 to 90 days of its age.

Research work has found that the Florunner variety of peanuts has more foliage area than Spanish types and can tolerate greater foliage losses before yield reductions occur. Field observations and research data indicate dryland Spanish peanuts can tolerate 3 to 5 medium to large larvae per linear row foot before yield losses will occur. Irrigated Spanish peanuts can tolerate approximately 6 to 8 medium to large larvae per linear row foot before significant yield losses occur.

### Burrowing Bugs

Burrowing bugs can economically damage peanuts. Adult burrowing bugs migrate into peanut fields around midsummer and usually are found beneath the soil surface attacking developing nuts. Burrowing bug feeding results in a light- to dark-brown mottling of the kernels, as well as grade reductions. Research indicates that damage occurs only when young or maturing peanuts are present. Preliminary research indicates effective control can be achieved when granular insecticides are applied, based on the presence of burrowing bugs or damage. Applications must be made 25 to 30 days before harvest because of label restrictions.

## Miscellaneous Pests

Other peanut pests include spider mites, three-cornered alfalfa hoppers, leafhoppers, cutworms, webworms, wireworms, white grubs, corn rootworms, leaf miners, flea beetles, stink bugs and lygus bugs. If high numbers of these pests develop, apply insecticides before extensive damage occurs. The Southern corn rootworm may become more of a problem in soil that is wet and has a high clay content. In some areas of the state, certain species of spider mites in peanuts have become highly resistant to most organo-phosphate insecticides and cannot be controlled with registered materials in most cases. Natural populations of beneficial insects usually control spider mites effectively. However, frequent application or misuse of any insecticide can result in the destruction of beneficial insects, thus favoring spider mite population increases and the development of insecticide resistance. Sulphur applications for leaf disease control will tend to suppress spider mite populations but will not provide mite control when populations have reached economically damaging levels.

## PRECAUTIONS

1. Read the label on each pesticide container before use. Follow instructions carefully, heed caution and warning statements and observe precautions concerning avoidance of residues. Adhere strictly to all restrictions concerning use of plant material as animal feed.

2. Keep pesticides in original containers. Keep them away from children or animals, preferably under lock, and away from food, feed, seed or other material that may become harmful if contaminated. Proper storage of partially used insecticide containers is very important. Many small children are accidentally poisoned each year because of easy access to insecticides which are improperly stored.

3. Dispose of the empty containers according to specifications on the label. If disposal instructions are not on the label, burn containers where smoke will not be a hazard, or bury them at least 18 inches deep in a place where water supplies will not be contaminated.

4. Parathion is extremely toxic to man and other warm-blooded animals. Use it in strict accordance with label instructions.

5. Improper use of insecticides can result in poor insect control as well as crop condemnation. When using approved insecticides, do not exceed recommended maximum dosage levels, and be sure to allow the proper time between the last application and harvest. Using materials without proper label clearance, or exceeding approved tolerance limits, can result in crop condemnation.

## POINTS ON APPLICATION

1. Insecticide use should be restricted to actual need, based on field inspections. Inspect peanut fields frequently and thoroughly. Begin applications while larvae are small, before they cause serious damage.

2. Use any row-crop duster or sprayer that can be adjusted to the desired row width. Direct flat fan nozzles to the base of the peanut plant for lesser cornstalk borer control, or direct hollow cone nozzles to cover plant thoroughly for foliage-feeding insect control.

3. Nozzle size, number of nozzles, ground speed and pressure influence the rate of chemical output per acre. Before starting the season, calibrate the sprayer accurately to insure application of recommended amounts of insecticide. Periodically check the calibration during the season. For information on the use of sprays and spray machinery, see *Insecticidal Spraying of Field Crops with Ground Machinery and Pesticide Application Ground Equipment Calibration Guide* (L-486 and L-764, Texas Agricultural Extension Service).

4. Apply dusts when the air is calm. Dew is not necessary for dust applications. Place dust nozzles on ground machines 4 to 6 inches above the plant. In late season, insecticide rates may need to be increased to give adequate coverage. Dusts and wettable powders are washed off by light showers more easily than sprays.

5. Apply insecticide sprays when weather conditions will not cause drift to adjacent fields or crops. If showers occur and the insecticides are washed off the plants within 12 to 24 hours of application, repeat application as soon as possible.

6. Some insecticides are destructive to honey bees. Since bees help pollinate many agricultural crops, care should be taken not to destroy them.

7. Maintain accurate, detailed records of pesticide use. Include such information as dates of purchase and application, type of equipment used, weather conditions, location of pesticide applications and rates applied.

*The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Cooperative Extension Service is implied.*

#### **POLICY FOR MAKING INSECT CONTROL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations on use of pesticides made by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station are based upon:

- Effectiveness under Texas conditions
- Avoidance of residues in excess of allowable tolerances
- Avoidance of toxicity to humans, animals and desirable vegetation
- Avoidance of adverse side effects upon beneficial predators, parasites, honey bees, fish and other wildlife, plants, animals and humans.

Suggested pesticides must be registered and labeled for use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Department of Agriculture. The status of pesticide label clearances is subject to change, and may have changed since this publication was printed. County Extension agents and specialists are advised of changes as they occur.

The USER is always responsible for the effects of pesticide residues on his livestock and crops, as well as problems that could arise from drift or movement of the pesticide from his property to that of others. **ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW CAREFULLY THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE CONTAINER LABEL.**

For further information, contact your county Extension agent, area and county Extension entomologist or:

Leader-Agricultural Chemicals, Texas Agricultural Extension Service,  
Texas A&M University (713/845-1353)

Insect	Insecticides listed at random	Rates (pounds technical per acre)	Formulation	Remarks
Thrips	Carbaryl (Sevin®)	1.0	Spray or dust	<b>Carbaryl.</b> Apply as needed. No time limitation. Has caused slight burn on seedling peanuts and rapidly growing plants. Yield losses to thrips have not been observed.
	Malathion	1.0	Spray	<b>Malathion.</b> Follow label directions for application.
Lesser cornstalk borer	<b>Irrigated peanuts</b>			See lesser cornstalk borer in text for details on type of damage, need for control, timing applications and scouting procedures.
	Apply granular materials in a 12- to 14-inch uniform band directly over the row. If applications are made when plant size permits incorporation, mix granules thoroughly into the top few inches of soil. However, granular applications should precede irrigation and be watered in thoroughly. Begin applications when infestation levels exceed 10 percent before initial pegging and 15 percent after initial pegging.			
	Diazinon	2.0	Granular	<b>Diazinon.</b> Livestock may be fed (1) peanut forage 7 days after treatment and (2) hulls after treatment.
	Dyfonate®	1.6	Granular	<b>Dyfonate.</b> Apply up to 30 days after pegging and incorporate lightly into the soil.
	Parathion	2.0-2.5	Granular	<b>Parathion.</b> Apply in 12- to 15-inch band over row just prior to or after pegging.
	<b>Dryland peanuts</b>			Apply sprays using two flat fan nozzles per row directed so that only the lower stems and a 6- to 8-inch band of soil are covered on each side of the row. This allows beneficial insect populations to exist on the upper two-thirds of the plant foliage. Repeat applications as indicated by infestation levels.
	Azodrin®	1.0	Spray	<b>Azodrin.</b> Apply in 20 to 40 gallons of water per acre as a basal-directed spray in a 10- to 12-inch band. Do not exceed two applications per crop. Do not apply within 15 days of harvest. Do not feed vines or hay from treated fields to livestock. Do not graze livestock in treated fields.
	Dasanit®	1.0	Spray	<b>Dasanit.</b> Apply in 20 to 40 gallons of water per acre as a basal-directed spray. Do not exceed four applications per crop. Do not apply basal-directed spray if higher rate (2.0-4.0 lb. a.i./acre) was used as preplant or pegging application. Do not apply within 30 days of harvest. Do not feed vines or hay from treated fields to livestock. Do not graze livestock in treated fields.
Parathion	0.5	Spray	<b>Parathion.</b> Do not apply within 15 days of harvest or grazing.	
Burrowing bugs				See burrowing bugs in text for type of damage, seasonal habits, need for control and timing applications. Need for application should be based on the presence of burrowing bugs and/or damage when peanuts are young or maturing.
	Dyfonate®	1.4 to 2.0	Granular	<b>Dyfonate.</b> Apply in 12- to 14-inch band over the rows at 1.5 lb. rate or as a broadcast application at 2.0 lb. rate. Application can be made up to 30 days after pegging begins. Incorporate lightly into the soil and follow application with irrigation, where practical. See grazing and harvesting restrictions under lesser cornstalk borer.
Foliage feeders Armyworms Cutworms Corn earworm Grasshoppers Leafhoppers Three-cornered alfalfa hopper	Make regular, frequent inspections of peanut fields. Start application before larvae cause serious damage and while they are small. Small larvae are easier to control.			
	Azodrin® Carbaryl	0.75 to 1.0 1.0	Spray Spray or dust	<b>Azodrin, Carbaryl and Parathion.</b> Observe restrictions cited above for thrips and lesser cornstalk borer.
	Methomyl®	0.5 to 0.9	Spray	
	Parathion	0.5	Spray	<b>Parathion.</b> Use only where obtaining control has been difficult. Only parathion is labeled for controlling the red-necked peanutworm. See restrictions under lesser cornstalk borer.
	Armyworms Red-necked peanutworm			
Spider mites	Azodrin®	0.75 to 1.0	Spray	<b>Azodrin.</b> Thorough coverage is essential. Observe restrictions under lesser cornstalk borer.
	Omite®	1.0	WP	<b>Omite.</b> Do not graze or feed hay to livestock.
Southern corn rootworm	Dasanit®	2.0	Granular	<b>Dasanit.</b> Apply uniformly in a 12- to 18-inch band over the row at pegging. Mix granules into soil at a depth of 1 to 2 inches on each side of row. Do not feed vines or hay from treated fields to livestock. Do not graze treated fields.
	Dyfonate®	1.5 to 2.0	Granular	<b>Dyfonate.</b> Apply in an 18-inch band over the 36- to 40-inch rows. Applications may be made up to 30 days after pegging. Incorporate lightly into the soil. See restrictions under lesser cornstalk borer.

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