

**Integrated Pest
Management
Calhoun, Victoria
And
Refugio Counties**

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We are finding unusually high populations of a black bug resembling stink bugs in fields of corn and cotton. Adults are black, roughly 1/4 inch long, and superficially resemble small stink bugs. However, they are more oval and have spines on their leg segments. The front wings are clear and membranous at the tips beyond a black thickened basal part, and can be seen at the rear end of the body when the wings are held at rest.



Burrower bugs feed on parts of plants including pepper and spinach seedlings, vegetable crops, cotton and peanuts. These bugs are burrowing bugs and are not considered a pest in the locally grown row crops.

Grain Sorghum and Corn

We are continuing to see low numbers of fall armyworms and yellow striped armyworms. These caterpillars will rarely cause economic damage to sorghum and corn in the whorl stage. Control of caterpillar pests at this stage is very difficult as well due to the insect being hidden inside the whorl of the plant. Other pests found include corn leaf aphids which are good for building beneficial insect populations to combat other pest insects such as yellow sugarcane aphids.



Cotton

Most of our cotton is not yet squaring. We are finding low numbers of thrips and aphids in cotton without seed treatments and we are already finding a few cotton fleahoppers and *Creontiades* adults in cotton fields.



The damage window for cotton fleahoppers and *Creontiades* is not until squares are on the plant. After squaring, the fleahopper economic threshold is 10-15 per 100 plants. Although there is little data to support any economic threshold for *Creontiades*, I suggest using the same threshold as fleahoppers.

Soybeans

Some soybean fields have begun blooming. This indicates that we need to begin monitoring fields for stink bugs. Since stink bugs are seed feeders, soybean crops are susceptible to damage from stink bugs during the reproductive phase of plant maturity. Stink bugs feed by inserting their needle-like mouthparts into soybean pods and sucking plant juices from the growing seeds. While we usually don't start seeing stink bugs until the beginning of pod formation, it is not unusual to find them earlier in the season.

Tobacco thrips are also being found on soybean leaves. Plant injury from a thrips is not well documented. I have seen thrips populations cause premature defoliation during July 2006 and June and July 2009. In both of these years the thrips (*Caliothrips phasioli*) were in very high numbers late in the season. From work done last year, I would use a treatment threshold of 10-25 thrips per leaflet when deciding on insecticidal control.

