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AGRONOMY**

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WORDS TO GROW BY...

This Issue:

- Sidedressing Nitrogen After Corn Planting
- Later Planted Corn May Behave Differently
- Soybeans Begin Nodule Formation
- Pythium and Phytophthora in Soybean Fields
- Leaf Damage to Corn
- Taylor Smith Interns
- Downy Mildew Watch
- Peachtree Borers, American Plum Borers Challenge Growers
- Scout for Colorado Potato Beetle

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Sidedressing Nitrogen After Corn Planting

Sidedress nitrogen (N) in corn is preferably done before the six-leaf stage. At that stage, plant N requirements begin to increase dramatically. Studies have shown that if nitrogen is applied by the six-leaf stage, corn plants suffer minimal yield loss compared to earlier nitrogen applications. At peak uptake prior to tassel, corn plants can absorb nearly 4 lb/A of N per day. Research at the University of Illinois has shown comparable corn yields with 60-inch knife spacings compared to 30-inch spacings when the ammonia was applied parallel to corn rows. 60-inch spacings require less power, disturb less soil, and wear out fewer knives.

Later Planted Corn May Behave Differently

Many growers got a later start or later finish to their corn planting this year as compared to many recent springs. If the weather cooperates, Hamilton Agronomy reminds growers that as corn is planted later, expect:

- Better stands—due to faster emergence in warmer soils
- Taller—if stalk elongation occurs during warmer weather
- Smaller root system—due to the relative partitioning between roots and stalks
- Better weed control—if you controlled the first flush at planting, and due to faster canopy closure
- Less damage from first generation European corn borer, but possibly more damage from second-generation borers

Soybeans Begin Nodule Formation

Nodule formation in soybeans starts shortly after emergence, but active nitrogen fixation does not begin until V2 or V3 (three or four nodes with unfolded leaves). This explains why beans will not develop dark green leaves until approximately six to eight inches tall. Nodules actively fixing nitrogen appear pink or red on the inside. If the nodules are white, green, or brown on the inside, N fixation is not occurring. Soil factors that can influence the formation of nodules are pH, water content, and the amount of available nitrogen in the soil.

Pythium and Phytophthora in Soybean Fields

Fields which remained wet for an extended period of time have a higher incidence of developing pythium and phytophthora diseases. Both fungal diseases appear as a soft, brown, watery rot that kills young seedlings. Genetic resistance to Phytophthora is available in some varieties, but no genetic resistance to Pythium is known. Metalaxyl, a common ingredient in seed treatments, is an effective tool in controlling both of these disease organisms.

Leaf Damage to Small Corn Not a Serious Problem

Frost, hail, or wind damage to tender, young corn leaves usually is not a serious problem. The corn growing point remains under ground for about 3 weeks after emergence, until the corn plant is about 10 inches tall with about six leaves.

Hamilton Farm Bureau 2008



Hamilton Agronomy Welcomes Summer Intern, Taylor Smith

Michigan State University Senior Taylor Smith is no stranger to Michigan fields and orchards. The Caledonia native is interning as a crop scout with the Hamilton Agronomy team. Jeff Layman, Hamilton Agronomy Manager Traverse City, said, "We're glad to welcome such a dedicated intern to our team. Taylor has already completed three previous summer internships in scouting. We appreciate her experience." Taylor is studying soil science and horticulture.

Downy Mildew Watch

Thousands of dollars of losses are caused each year by damage from Downy Mildew. Hamilton Agronomists remind growers it is crucial to have a prevention program in place to control Downy Mildew in vine crops.

Peachtree Borers, American Plum Borers Challenge Growers

Whether you find American Plum Borer or Greater or Lesser Peachtree Borers (PTB) in your orchard, you will want to monitor their numbers carefully. That's according to Hamilton Agronomist Jason Jablon who noted, "We monitor populations through trapping to identify the emergence of American Plum and Peachtree Borers. Many growers use trunk sprays on cherries. Greater PTB are usually a problem on younger trees. It is important to note that Greater PTB don't need an entry wound to damage trees as they bore into the trunk at the soil line. We see the highest numbers of Lesser PTB and these also seem to cause the greatest damage. Lesser PTB often bore into trunks that have shaker injury." Jablon added that the most effective control period for PTB is in late June or early July. (Photo: Lesser Peachtree Borer; MSU)



Scout Carefully for Colorado Potato Beetle

Early, heavy snowpack may have protected populations of Colorado potato beetle over-wintering in Michigan fields. Hamilton Agronomists say some parts of the state may see heavier than normal infestations. Depending on populations, spot treatment or broader intervention may be necessary.

Start scouting two weeks post emergence by counting the total number of specified stages of Colorado potato beetle on 20 (non-consecutive) plants. After recording the number of beetles, check to note percentage of defoliation on injured plants. Remember, spray timing is critical to effective control, and insecticide use should be rotated to prevent potential resistance development. Growers have new treatment options available, including some newly-registered products. See us today for economic thresholds and treatment recommendations.



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