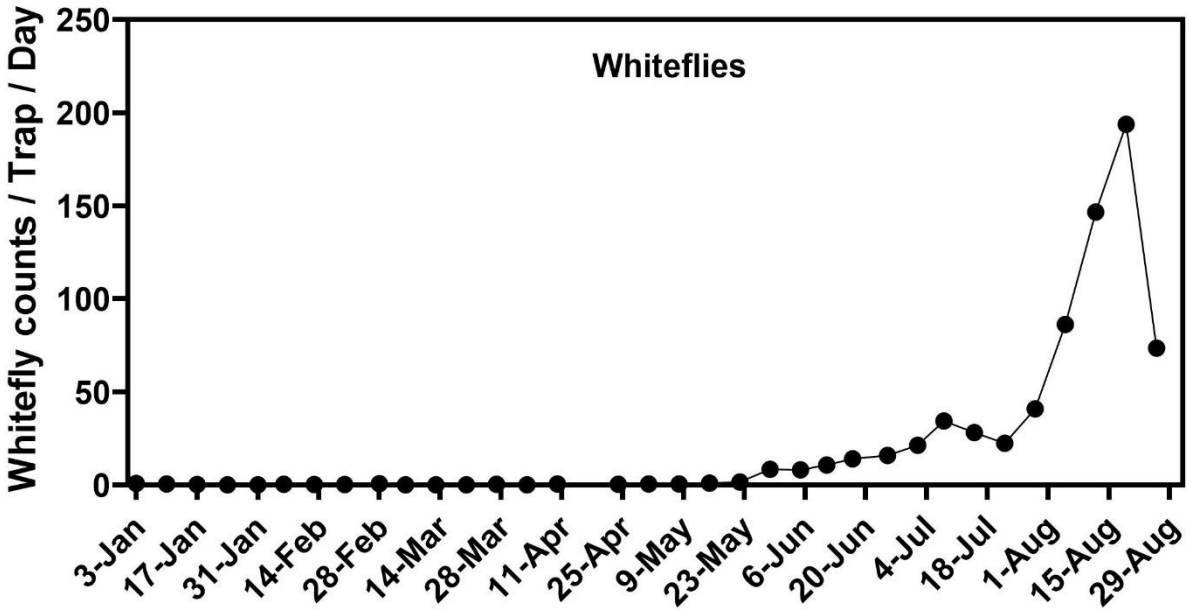
Area-wide monitoring of key insect pests across the Imperial Valley: 1st Sept 2025 updates

The adult insect counts from the monitoring trap network up to Aug 26th, 2025, are shown in the graphs below. Each dot in the graph represents the average insect count from 19 traps across the Imperial Valley for that sampling week, expressed as insect counts per trap per day.

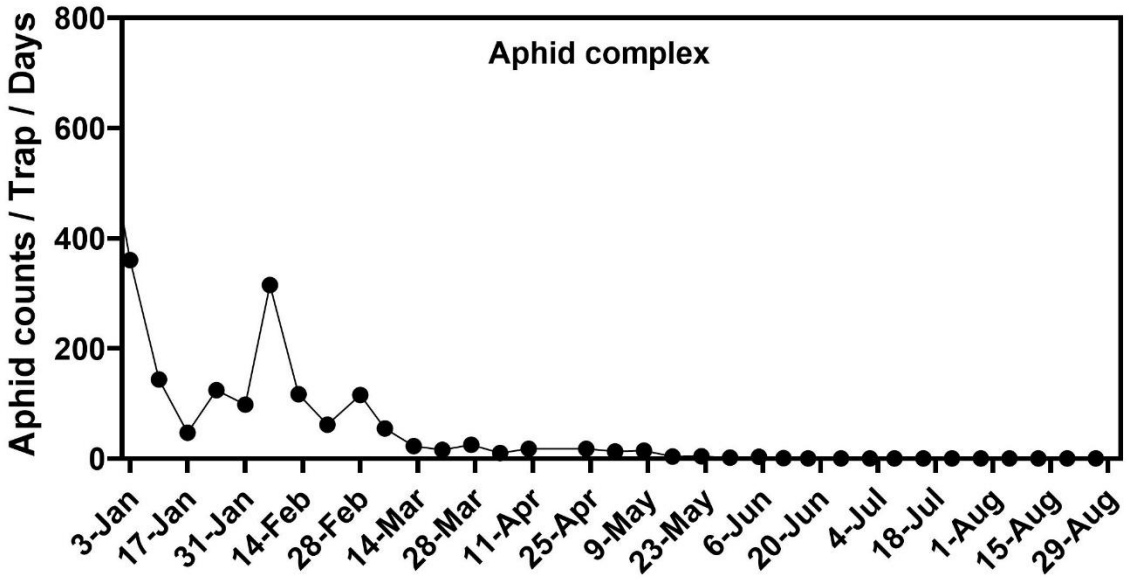
Whiteflies

The whitefly counts in the traps consisted mainly of sweetpotato whitefly (*Bemisia tabaci* MEAM1). A small fraction of the total count (< 5%) comprises bandedwinged whiteflies, *Trialeurodes abutilonia*, and other minor species. Our trap data indicate high whitefly adult activity across the valley. While the adult counts in the trap declined significantly in the most recent counts, this is likely a temporary drop influenced by the recent monsoon storm.



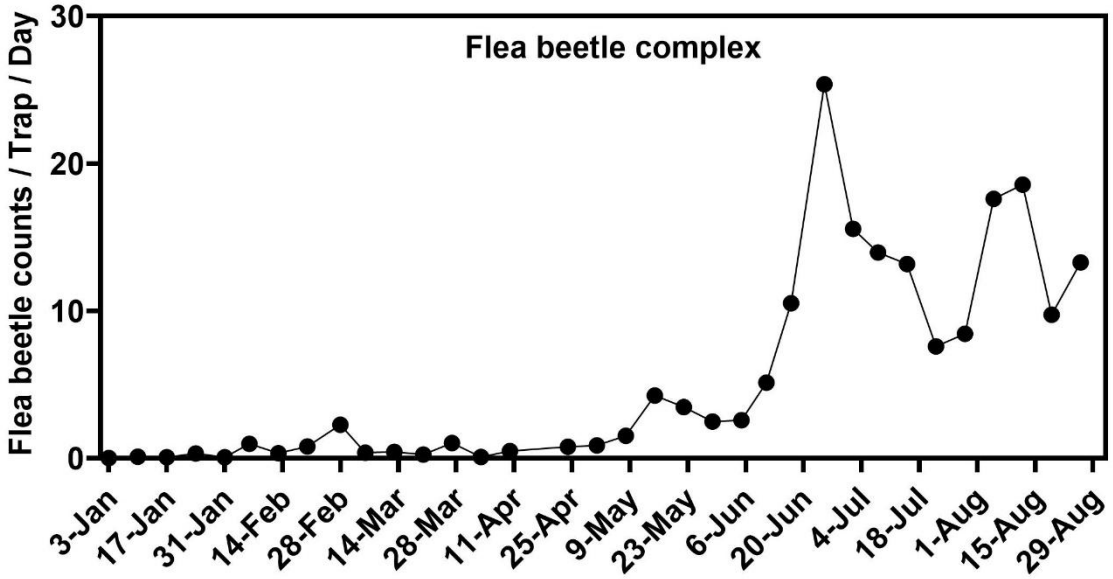
Aphids

The trap count data of aphids below represents the aphid complex present in the Valley. Currently, we are observing near-zero alate aphid activity throughout the Imperial Valley.



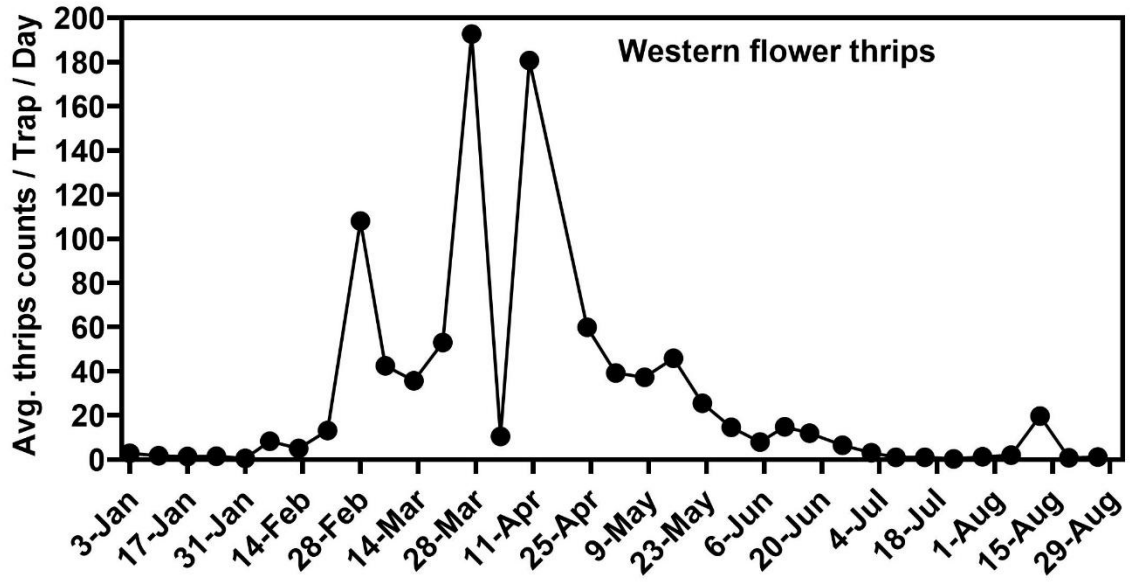
Flea beetles

The flea beetle counts in the traps comprised the pale-striped flea beetle, *Systena blanda*, the desert corn flea beetle, *Chaetocnema ectypa,* and a few other minor species. We are currently observing high levels of adult activity across the valley. Additional weekly sweep net sampling of multiple alfalfa fields across the Imperial Valley identified high flea beetle adult populations in some of these fields. I will be monitoring their numbers in these fields over the next few weeks as we approach the fall vegetable planting season.



Western flower thrips

While the traps capture several thrips species, only western flower thrips, *Frankliniella occidentalis*, were counted to provide more specific data, as they are the primary thrips species of concern for several crops in the Imperial Valley. Currently, we are logging very low adult counts in the traps.



As a side note, we are observing **an increasing number of bermudagrass stem maggot adults (Atherigona reversura) in the yellow sticky traps**. **A survey conducted over the last two weeks covering 60 fields across the Imperial Valley identified multiple bermudagrass fields with high bermudagrass stem maggot adult presence and plant damage symptoms.** Please look for signs of damage (see below) when scouting the bermudagrass fields. Please refer to the article by Michael D. Rethwisch for more information about this pest.

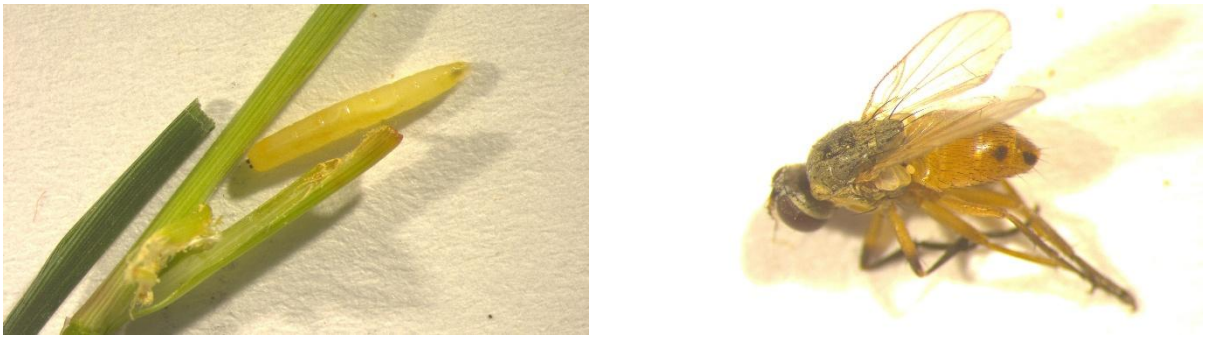


Figure. Bermudagrass stem maggot larvae (left) and adult (right).

Figure. Bermudagrass stem maggot damage symptoms. The larvae feeding inside the stem, outward from the terminal node of the plant, kill the terminal along with top one or two leaves on the plant.

If you are interested in additional data or have questions or comments, contact Arun Babu at (442) 265 -7700 or arbabu@ucanr.edu.