

On the whole, the season so far has been one we can work with, though we all know it isn't over till it's over. Some parts of the state have had to replant drowned fields from early season rains, others have had repeat visits from hungry hungry deer (worse than hippos...), but in a lot of cases we have some pretty good looking peanuts. Tomato spotted wilt virus pressure has been somewhat elevated in several areas as well, and talking with folks from surrounding states at the APRES meeting, that seems to generally be the norm this year. Hopefully this doesn't become an increasing trend in the coming years. As we move into fall, we enter a time of many changes: days getting shorter, temperatures getting a bit lower, moving the clock back an hour, and the classic leaves changing color on the hardwoods. While this is certainly nice, the color change we've really been waiting for is the one that happens underground as the crop approaches optimal maturity. From white to blonde, orange and pinto, dark brown and finally black, the changing colors of the peanut hull mesocarp can give a good indication of when it is time to dig. We can get a rough ballpark idea of when varieties might be approaching optimal digging by looking at their days to maturity rating (Bailey: 132 DAP, Georgia 06G: 140 DAP, TUFRunner 511: also around 140 DAP, and so on... see the production guide for more varieties), but it's good to remember this is only an averaged approximation. Actual maturity from field to field is the result of the specific combination of what happens to the crop each year in terms of planting date, whether or not we did supplemental replanting, growing conditions, and stresses along the way. Because of this our operations are more precise when we measure maturity instead of using the averaged rating. At the same time, when we have a lot of acres to dig and weather conditions limit when we can get peanuts dug, some fields end up getting dug at suboptimal times. Even so, it helps to have a target for optimal maturity to work with so that if we need to be flexible, we can do our best to land as close as possible to the bullseye.

Variety Maturity – Can You Dig it?

While we're waiting on the numbers from 2016, this test from 2015 examined crop value, taking into account yield and grade, and maturity profile according to mesocarp color of eight varieties across four digging dates. There's no argue that 2015 was not the most typical year.

Nevertheless, there are some useful things we can take away from this trial. Digging conditions were as follows, 140 DAP: wet; 150 DAP: too wet; 160 DAP: good; and 182 DAP (runners only): wet. As you might expect, too wet of conditions during earlier digging dates biased values downward in several cases. A good example of this is how the moderate maturity Georgia 06G had greater overall value during the 160 DAP digging date when soil conditions were good, as compared to its more characteristic 140 DAP digging date when soil conditions were wet.

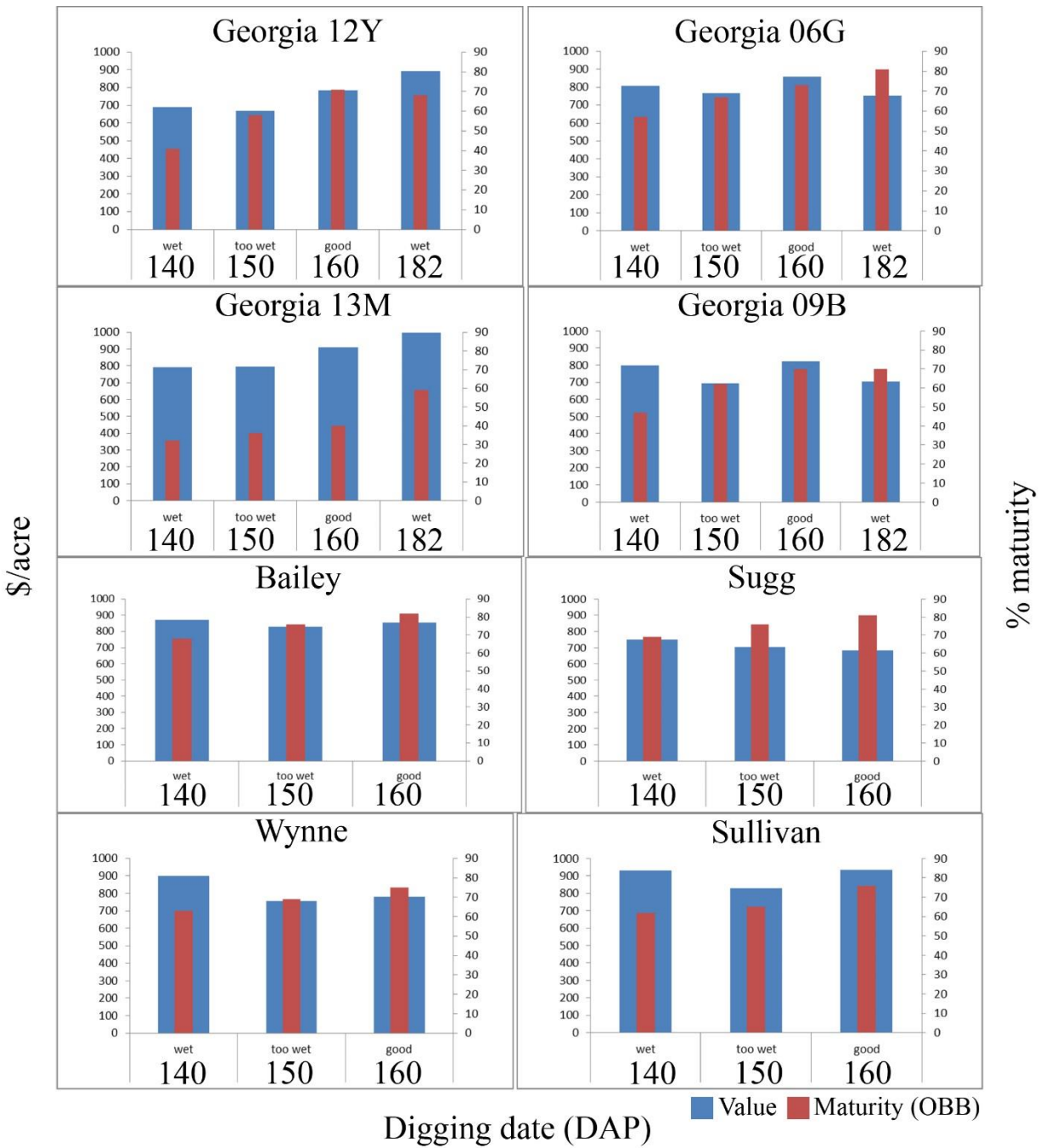
Georgia 13M has previously been described as having moderate maturity; in this test, both its value and maturity continued to increase as digging became later. Georgia 12Y demonstrated similar increases in value and maturity as digging dates became later. These results support Georgia 12Y and 13M (provided contract availability) as good late maturing runners that growers can have in their fields to complement acres of more moderate maturity varieties. Since both of these varieties effectively "held on" to their pods during late digging conditions, this

suggests growers can prioritize digging earlier maturing varieties first (assuming equal crop health and digging conditions) and dig Georgia 12Y and 13M fields last for best value. Another thing worth noting is how pods of Georgia 13M can be more reluctant to change color as readily as other varieties. Even so, if given enough time in the growing season, they tend to yield and grade well (provided late leaf spot has been kept at bay). Stay tuned for when we get the numbers from this year's trial, where we're also looking to see how UF's PeanutFARM maturity predictions perform under South Carolina conditions.

Upcoming Extension Events

This fall we will have harvest maturity/blasting clinics around the state to demonstrate using a pressure washer and to talk about things to look for to help in answering the annual question of "When should I dig?" Whether you're a rookie peanut grower, a seasoned veteran, or somewhere in between, everyone's welcome. Check with your local Extension agent to see which may be closest to you. Along those lines, the Edisto REC Peanut Field Day has been set for September 1st, continuing the tradition of the first Thursday in September. Field tours will highlight important aspects of peanut production, including variety and fungicide performance, weed control, irrigation scheduling, growth regulator use, precision agriculture applications, and a market update. Let the peanut information whet your appetite and the catered lunch finish the job. Continuing Education Units and Pesticide Recertification Credits will be there as well. Registration starts at 8:00 am, and field tours start at 9:00 am. Hope to see you there!

Figure 1. Crop value and maturity by variety and digging date, with general digging conditions noted above digging date times.



Digging date (DAP)

■ Value ■ Maturity (OBB)