Determining Peanut Pod Maturity and Estimating the Optimal Digging Date

Using Pod Mesocarp Color for Digging Virginia Market Type Peanut

Using the peanut profile board
Gather 130 harvestable pods from each variety within a field, collecting pods from four or five locations. Reap pods to water and pod shedding. Use traditional pod sheller or a pressure washer equipped with a turbo-nozzle to remove the outer hull and expose the mesocarp color. Your county extension agent can assist with this procedure.

Using the images of pods at the top of each column, place pods on the profile board under the appropriate mesocarp color category. Let pods dry for 3-5 days.

Factors influencing the decision to dig
- Pod maturity (influenced by variety and environmental conditions and plant health).
- Harvest and accumulation and will increase.
- Peanut acreage, especially related to other crops.
- Seed conditions and weather forecast (likelihood of frost).
- Disease pressure (balance between pod age and increased pod fill and pod weight).
- Digging, combining, hauling, and drying capacities.

Optimum maturity in 20 to 24 days

Influence of disease on the digging decision
- Disease can dramatically affect pod shed and subsequent yield loss. However, most research suggests that extremely high levels of disease are needed to justify early digging.
- Early digging is not justified if fruits have tannin/podding with early digging is justified in:
  - CHR (black root rot), at least 40 percent disease
  - White mold or Sclerotinia.

Influence of freeze potential on the digging decision
- Freeze damage, often referred to as frost damage, can greatly affect peanut quality, peanut flavor, and market value. Digging within 3 days prior to an expected frost is extremely risky even when good drying conditions exist. Poor drying conditions will extend the unsafe window for digging peanuts to greater than 5 days.

Percents of a sample that contain 150 pods