

Gaston Grower Spotlight- March 2022



Diamondback Track

As April begins Gaston County Cooperative Extension will begin to track [diamondback moth](#) activity at [Piedmont Farmstead](#). Activity will be monitored throughout the state by various horticulture agents. Monitoring occurs through sticky traps (like the one pictured above), pheromone is placed on the sticky trap to attract male moths. Male moth counts will give entomologists a better understanding of the moth's life cycle and how it differs in North Carolina's various regions. An understanding of pest life cycles is crucial for early management and reducing pressure throughout the growing season.



A diamondback moth with somewhat indistinct “diamonds.”

Photo by J. R. Baker, NC State University

Piedmont Farmstead was selected as a partner due to their year-long production of various cole crops (broccoli, cabbage, kale, etc.). Cole crops are about the only item on the menu for diamondback moth larva. North Carolina has around 6 generations of diamondback moths per year and the moth overwinters as an adult on field debris. The moth has developed resistance to a broad spectrum of insecticides, including some organic options. It will be interesting to monitor Piedmont farmstead through the growing season given that they do not manage pests with pesticides. We do anticipate numbers being lower for their farm, with smaller farm size and the lack of residue left behind after a crop is finished. Notice the plot at the top of the page is equipped with overhead irrigation. Overhead irrigation is another method for lowering population numbers, higher diamondback moth mortality is associated with rainfall.



The first trap check of the season, April 8th, 2022 is pictured above. The top picture is the sticky trap with the pheromone capsule. The bottom picture is a close up of the diamondback moth, only about 3/8 of an inch long. Three moths were found in the two traps on site.



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