

PINK HIBISCUS MEALYBUG QUARTERLY REPORT
Period 7/1/07 - 9/30/07

The Pink Hibiscus Mealybug (PHM) Biological Control Program has produced 282,925 *Anagyrus kamali*, 337,850 *Gyranusoidea indica*, and 26,533 *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* during this reporting period. The numbers shipped and released around the state include; 226,600 *A. kamali* (avg. 17,480/wk), 246,600 *G. indica* (avg. 18,763/wk) and 12,693 *C. montrouzieri* (avg. 1,057/wk). The parasitoid production continues to exceed the established goal of 10,000/wk. In addition, the number of requests for parasitoids from field personnel has increased from the last reporting period and as a result, measures have been taken to increase production during this period.

The host for the PHM, the Japanese pumpkin, is currently in production in two growing locations in Florida; Hastings and Citra. An experimental crop was planted in July in Hastings to determine if a successful summer cucurbit crop is possible in Florida. This crop was planted using transplants on 8/6/07 and is scheduled for harvesting early October. A fall crop in Citra was transplanted on 9/20/07 and scheduled for harvest in mid November. The Hastings crop will provide the PHM with host material thru next quarter and the Citra crop will provide PHM host material thru the following quarter. Work plans are underway to test the success of growing Japanese pumpkins in 20 gallon pots during the winter months. The expected planting dates are late November or early December in central or south Florida. .

In order to increase efficacy of rearing the predatory beetle, *C. montrouzieri*, two experiments using supplemental artificial diets are currently in progress. Both diets have produced excellent results with an increase in the number of beetles produced. Since neither artificial diet will sustain *C. montrouzieri* on its own, each cage setup with artificial diet will also have PHM infested Japanese pumpkins. *C. montrouzieri* has been observed using PHM egg masses to lay their eggs. The final draft of the *C. montrouzieri* Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will be completed in early October.

There are currently 25 counties receiving parasitoids and predators from the Gainesville rearing facilities. These counties are; Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Flagler, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lee, Manatee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Lucie and Volusia.

The Texas Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture have asked for assistance in controlling recent PHM outbreaks in Texas. The PHM project will start shipping parasitoids to Texas in the beginning of October.

Submitted by:

Lee Trester, Biological Scientist III

DOACS, DPI

P.O. Box 147100 Gainesville, FL 32614-7100

(352) 372-3505 x 449

trestel@doacs.state.fl.us