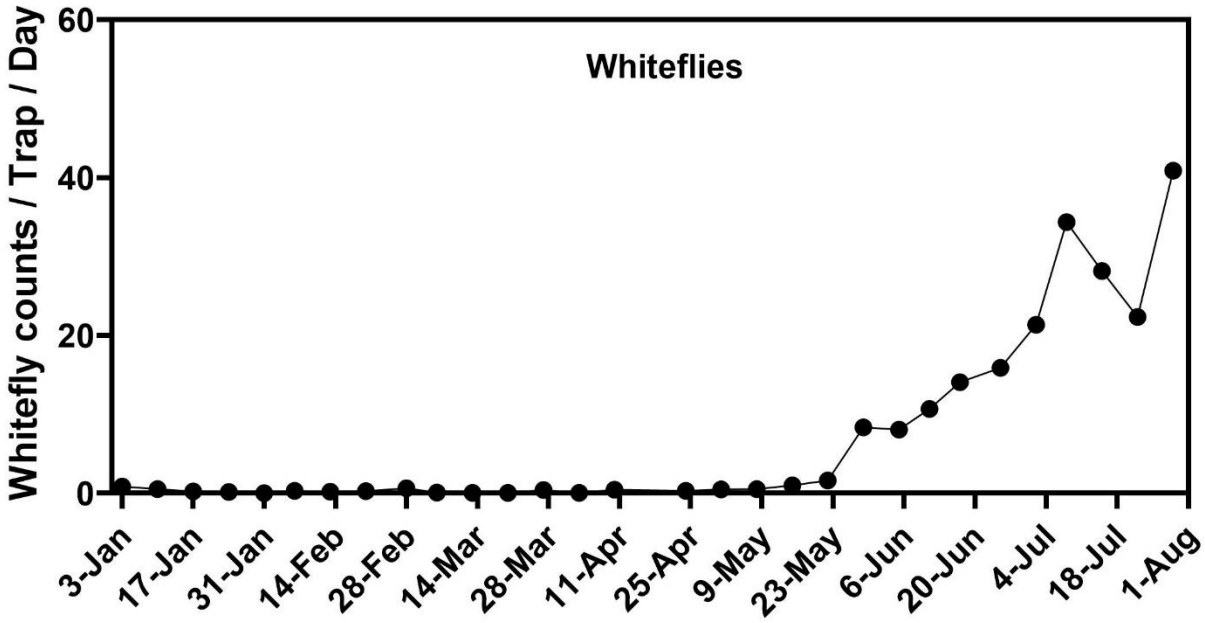
Area-wide monitoring of key insect pests across the Imperial Valley: 1st Aug 2025 updates

The adult insect counts from the monitoring trap network up to July 29th, 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.

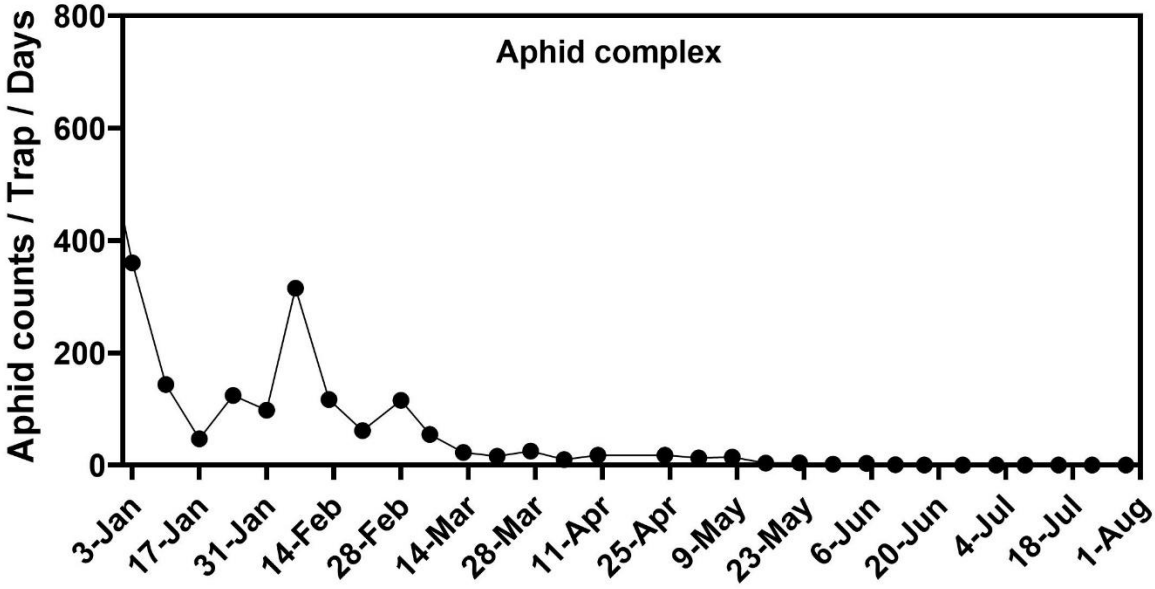
Whiteflies

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 suggests their numbers are rising across the Valley.



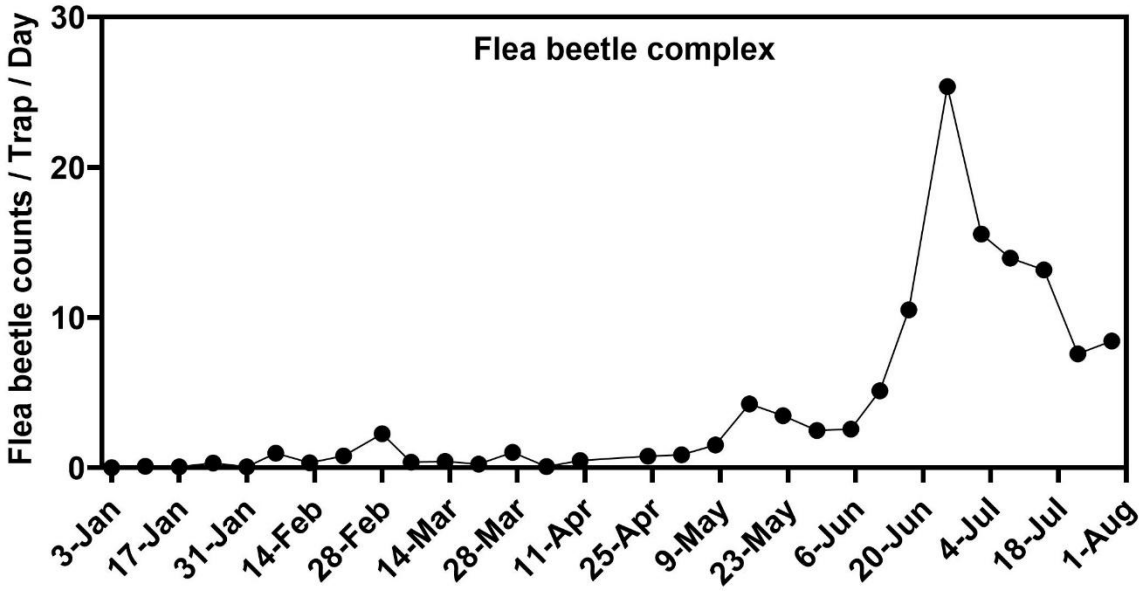
Aphids

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.



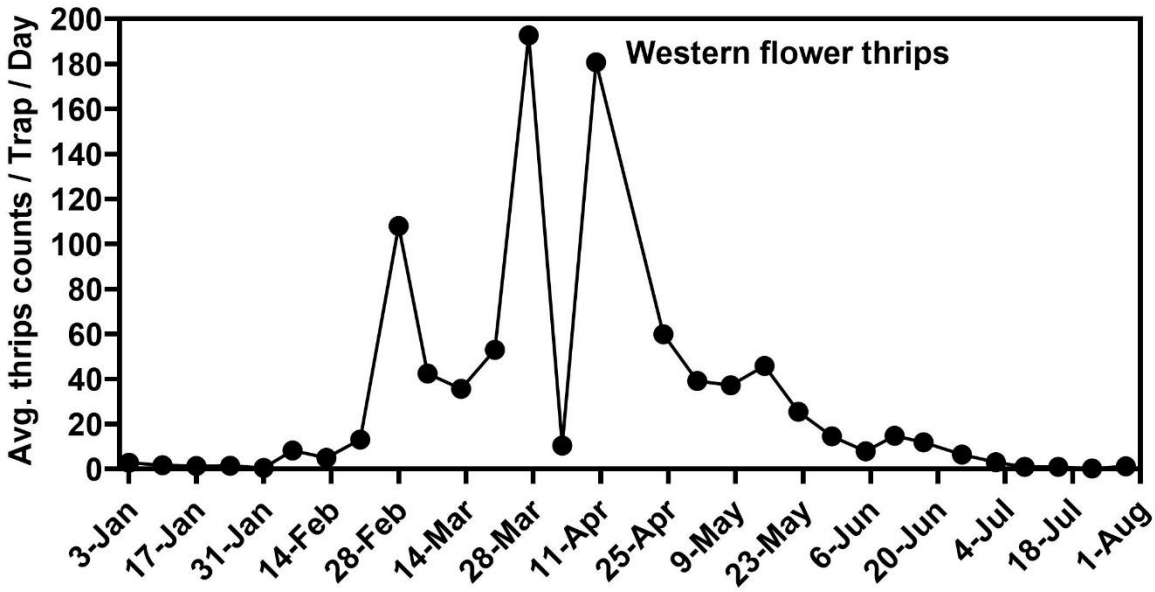
Flea beetles

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 moderate levels of adult activity across the valley. Additional weekly sweep net sampling of 12 alfalfa fields across the Imperial Valley identified a high flea beetle adult population 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 low adult counts in the traps.



Additionally, we noticed a **high population of Alfalfa caterpillars and adults in alfalfa fields, especially in some fields north and northwest of Westmoreland.** For management guideline, please refer to UC IPM page here (https://ipm.ucanr.edu/agriculture/alfalfa/alfalfa-caterpillar/#gsc.tab=0).

Moreover, we are noticing **increasing numbers of bermudagrass stem maggot adults** (*Atherigona reversura*) **in the yellow stick traps**. While we are catching them in low numbers in most of the traps located across the Imperial Valley, their numbers are becoming increasingly concerning in some traps located **south of I-8,** especially around Heber and south of El Centro. Please refer to this article by Michael D. Rethwisch to learn more about this pest.

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