# Peanut Pointers

**July, 2025**

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

*Peanut Team*

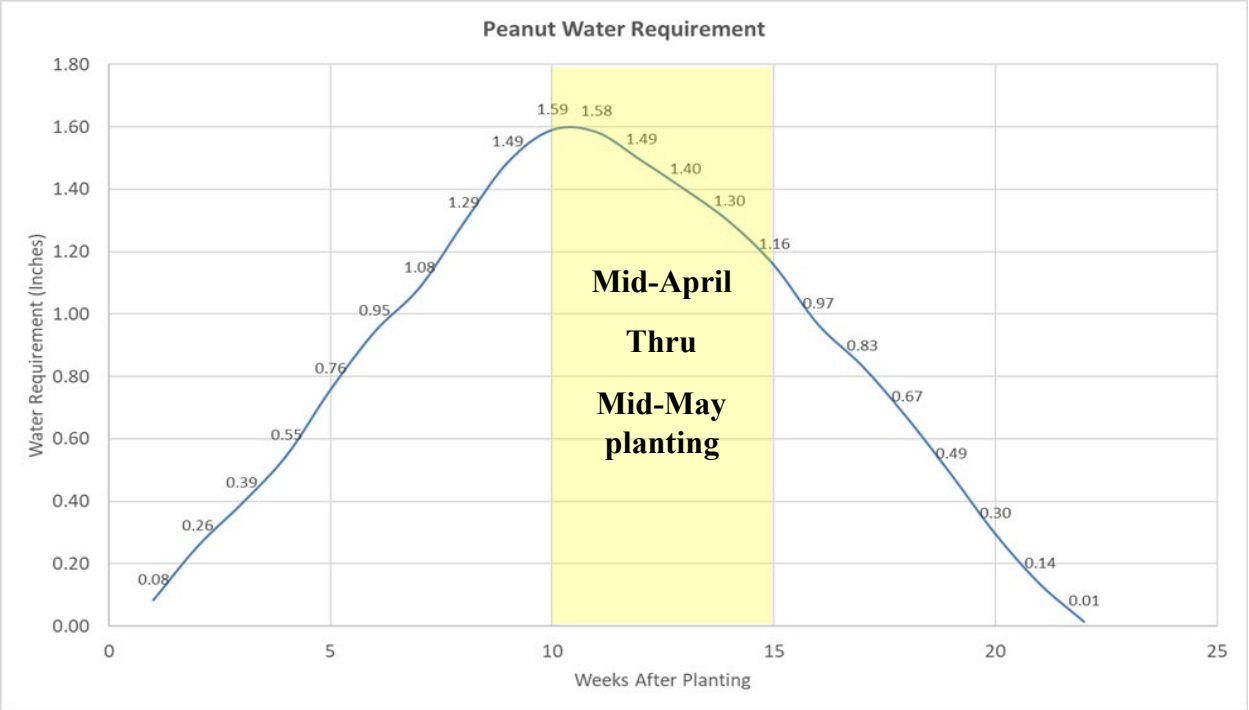
**July/Mid-Season Peanut Irrigation Considerations**

Jason Mallard, David Hall, Phillip Edwards, and Wesley Porter

Most of our peanut crop in the state should be pegging and putting on pods by now and approaching peak water use. We went from somewhat adequate rainfall to very hot and dry during mid-June. Recently we have gotten sporadic showers across some of the state, however, I would not be comfortable relying on sporadic rain showers to meet my crop demands. Now that we are moving into July it typically gets hot. While we do receive some rainfall, we need to ensure we are staying on top of our irrigation requirements. Please refer to the graph below to indicate where you are at with weekly water use in your peanut crop. Remember this requirement is IRRIGATION and RAINFALL with historical evapotranspiration rates figured into the equation. Due to years of research, peanut water demands during different stages have been identified but one of the variables in irrigation scheduling is ET rates. A free tool is available to help determine how much water is lost daily to evapotranspiration, the UGA Weather stations. Just pick a site and enter a timeline on the water balance tab. It should be noted that this is Evapotranspiration is not directly equal to crop water usage. To calculate actual crop water usage, the ET value must be multiplied by the current crop coefficient. As mentioned earlier, UGA Extension's Checkbook method of irrigation scheduling was developed by multiplying the peanut crop coefficient by the average historical ET rates. Recent ET rates around Tifton have been in the range of 0.20 to 0.25 inches per day. ET gives you a good estimation of water requirements, but soil moisture sensors or apps are far superior in irrigation scheduling.

Once peanuts begin blooming and pegging, they will use roughly 0.2" of water daily for ~20 days. By the middle of July, those early/mid-May planted peanuts can use up to 0.3" of water per day on days that it is hot, windy, with low humidity, so it is important to not get behind on irrigation. It is also important to not let your soil temperature get too high with peanuts pegging as high soil temperatures can burn off pegs. Even though it feels like we are still early in the crop season, peanut will hit peak water usage during July, so do your best not to fall behind and lose yield, especially if we continue to remain in similar weather conditions as we have through the middle of June. I think it is important to note that the soil water holding capacity of most of our sandy loam soils falls in the range of 1.0 inches per foot of soil with 50% of that being plant available. Thus, even with a two foot rooting depth, you will only have 1.0 inches of water available to the crop and that will be utilized in three days at the rate of 0.3 inch usage per day.

Below is the estimated current Checkbook water use for peanuts across most of the state for the month of July. If you are using a computer based scheduling models such as Irrigator Pro in combination with soil thermometers, it has a maximum soil temperature notification that will alert you whenever your soil temperature reaches threshold, informing you that irrigation may be required to cool your soil temperature, even if there is adequate soil moisture.




For producers who have installed soil moisture sensors, please take note of these few comments. Be mindful that skips or gaps can occur during the growing season due to disease or washouts. Once a stand is established and sensors are placed in an appropriate location in the field, we can often be guilty of taking for granted that the sensors will remain in an optimum location and supply accurate readings for the entire season. If you are not the one making trips across the field spraying or scouting, it would be wise to double check your sensor locations. Seedlings present after emergence can be nonexistent weeks later. The lack of plants will result in bare ground and the lack of roots near the sensor causing false water use data to be recorded since nothing will be using water near the sensor. Thus, the sensor will provide erroneous soil moisture data. If you are utilizing Irrigator Pro, a lack of canopy will cause the 2-inch soil temp readings to be flawed, leading to the program suggesting irrigation applications due to the high soil temperature. Early to mid-season soil temperatures and moisture availability readings can be affected greatly with poor sensor location. Fruiting and pegging in peanuts are critical periods for water requirements. Don't be fearful to pull the sensor up and reinstall it in a more suitable crop area. You have made an investment in utilizing the sensor and are expecting to receive accurate and quality data from your sensor, but this will only occur if you have your sensor placed where peanuts are present. As shown in the image below, the sensor is in a location that has no plants or canopy nearby to accurately read information from. This sensor needs to be removed and reinstalled between two plants that have adequate canopy and rooting development.

Remember to do a good job staying on top of your irrigation during the month of July since it is during peak water use. There are many irrigation scheduling tools available to help with this task. If you have more questions about irrigation scheduling or crop water usage reach out to your local UGA Extension Agent and general water usage can be found here: Irrigation Reference Guide for Corn, Cotton, Peanuts, and Soybeans | UGA Cooperative Extension.

**A Closer Look at Species Selection for Summer Covers**
**Taylor Singleton**

As a follow up to last month's article on fallow fields and summer covers, I thought we'd dive a little deeper into some cover crop options that you may be considering planting in a fallow field or other areas where you want to keep the ground covered.

Again, the two biggest factors that should drive your decision on what cover crop species to plant are: 1) Economics (What is your budget?) and 2) Goals (What do you want to accomplish?). Without clearly defining these two parameters, you may be setting yourself up for disappointment if the resulting cover isn't what you imagined. Only you can decide what will work for your operation economically during this point of the year, just keep in mind, everything has a value, including the goals/outcomes outlined below. You just must decide what it's worth to ***your operation***.

When planting summer cover crops, our goals and objectives are very similar to those we hope to achieve when planting covers in the fall. These objectives were covered in more detail last month; in general (but not exclusively), we can expect different cover crop species to provide at least one of the following outcomes: 1) Generating N or scavenging N, 2) Improving soil characteristics (tilth, OM, infiltration, etc.), 3) Suppressing weeds, 4) Minimizing erosion, and/or 5) Grazing/Forage source.

With this in mind, below is an in-depth look at what different types of summer cover crop can bring to the table, to help guide your decision making:

**Grains/Grasses**

- ***Millets*** (including browntop, Japanese, Pearl, others) – Fast growing and can produce medium to high levels of biomass (good for weed suppression). Tolerates tough summer conditions (heat, moisture/drought) well, although can be species/cultivar dependent. Attractive to wildlife as a food and habitat source. Its fibrious root system is excellent for scavenging residual soil N and helping mitigate soil erosion. Can be used for grazing and forage, however, ***must be very careful of potential for accumulation of toxic levels of nitrates during adverse conditions than can be lethal to livestock*** (check out this UGA **article** and this **one** for more info). Some species can mature very quickly (~45 days) and produce A LOT of variable seed….must manage appropriate to avoid weedy problems later!!!
- ***Sorghum-sudangrass*** – Fast growing and can produce tall, heavy biomass in hot summer conditions. Great for weed suppression, adding organic matter back to the soil, and holding the ground in place. Depending on the conditions, supplemental fertility may be needed to maximize biomass. Can help disrupt the life cycle of some nematode species. There are cultivars with sterile seedheads available. **If grazing, must be mindful of potential for prussic acid poisoning** (UGA **article** for more info)!!

**Legumes**

- ***Sunn hemp*** – A tropical legume that grows quickly, produces heavy biomass, and fixes high levels of N. Can suppress multiple types of nematodes and be used as a grazing crop at early growth stages. If allowed to grow to maturity, the plant becomes very woody and produces viable seed – a termination plan is needed before seed set.
- ***Cowpeas*** – Extremely productive in GA summer conditions (hot, dry), growing fast and producing moderate levels of biomass. Excellent at producing N and reducing erosion due to a deep tap root. Some varieties are nematode resistant. Their busy and viney nature can make ***mechanical***

***control/termination very difficult***; additionally, they can mature and produce viable seed in as little as 45 days. ***Without timely management (<u>termination @ bloom</u>), can become a VERY weedy problem*****!**

**<u>Broadleaves</u>**

- ***Buckwheat*** – This one is one of my favorites. A super-fast-growing broadleaf that great for pollinators and beneficial insects! It <u>does not tolerate the extreme middle-of-summer heat and drought</u> well, so ideally a late spring planting is best (although not very realistic in most cases). Often you will see/use this in a mix with other cover crop species. Can produce a viable seed in as little as 30 days….**MUST terminate (mowing/herbicides) within one week of first flower**. Moderate levels of biomass generated; can suppress weeds and minimize soil erosion due to fast ground coverage.
- ***Sunflower*** – Hugely popular with wildlife (and pollinators), is it very versatile and adapted to a wide variety of growing conditions that we encounter in GA. A large taproot can help with compaction and residual N uptake. Moderate to large levels of biomass can be generated, helping suppress weeds and hold the soil in place; residue can become very "woody" once mature and drop seed that are viable. If weediness is a concern, make sure to terminate timely.

Whatever your objective is, there is a warm season cover crop species that can help you achieve that goal. With all the rain we've been receiving, combined with a larger-than-normal number of fallow fields, it's more important than ever that we help hold our valuable soil in place!

**Growth Regulator Guidance: Observations & Recommendations**
**Scott Monfort**

Over the past week, I've received numerous calls and emails regarding growth regulators (Kudos or Apogee). In many early-planted peanut fields, we're seeing row closure much earlier than expected—some even within 55 days, particularly on sandy soils with good moisture. This has led growers to ask whether they should go ahead and apply or wait until the typical 65 days after planting.

**My Take:** Follow the plant's actual growth—not the calendar. In some fields, expected at 65 days, vegetative development has lagged despite ample rainfall. This reinforces that timing decisions should be based on observed vine growth, not just days after planting.

**Growth Regulator Timing & Rate Recommendations**
If you planted peanuts in late April to early May, the first application should ideally have been initiated by now (75–80 days). Delayed application may reduce the regulator's effectiveness.
Recommended application guidelines for runner peanuts:

- **Rate Range:** 3.5–5.4 oz/acre, applied twice
- **Trigger:** When 90% of vines are lapped (≥50% lateral vines touching in row middles)
- **Second Application:** 14–21 days after the first
- **Avoid:** 7.25 oz/acre applied twice—this rate is excessive for runner types

Total seasonal application should not exceed **11–11.5 oz/acre**, as higher rates may cause plant stress and reduce yields.

**Field-Specific Adjustments & Cautions**

🌱 **Irrigated Fields**

- Use growth regulator only if you have a history of aggressive vine growth or are growing vigorous varieties like GA-12Y or TIFNV-HG.
- Avoid spraying during hot, dry spells (90°F+ with no expected rain). High temps and regulator use together may over stress plants.
    - Wait until weather moderates.
    - Apply irrigation 1–2 days prior to spraying.

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| **Rate Adjustments by Variety & Vigor** | |
|---|---|
| **Situation** | **Recommended Rate** |
| **GA-20VHO, GA-21GR** | Not recommended |
| **GA-06G and other varieties** | 3.5 to 5.4 oz/acre twice |
| **GA-12Y, TifNVHG** | 5.4 oz/acre twice |
| **Rapid vine growth** | 7.25 oz/acre followed by 4 oz/acre |
| **Missed 60–75 day window** | One application of 7.25 oz/acre (up to day 80–85) |

💧 **Non-Irrigated Fields**

- Generally not recommended—but if conditions are excessively wet:
    - Consider **1 application at 7.25 oz/acre** (between 60–75 days)
    - Avoid two applications unless rains continue steadily; dry, hot conditions after a second spray can severely impact yields

**These insights are intended to support you helping individual growers—not as blanket recommendation.** Your fields, conditions, and timing all play a role in whether growth regulators are truly beneficial. Don’t hesitate to reach out with questions—I'm happy to help evaluate your specific scenario.
Let me know if you'd like a social media version, field handout, or anything more visual!