

Broad Mite Numbers on the Rise in 2026

By Aaron Cato

Broad mite is a serious issue for many Arkansas blackberry growers usually beginning around late July. This year we started observing impactful infestations in field-grown blackberry in Northwest and Northeast Arkansas as early as July 16th. We observed some sites in the last week where broad mite is already causing plants to shed leaves (Picture 1). Blackberry varieties like 'Ouachita' or 'Apache' appear to be the most sensitive and the first to be injured, but observations in previous years suggest all varieties are attractive to broad mite and can incur significant injury.



Picture 1. Blackberry leaf necrosis caused by broad mite feeding observed on July 22, 2026 near Batesville, Arkansas. Photos by Aaron Cato.

Broad mite at damaging levels by mid-July should be a worrying sign for all blackberry growers in the Midsouth region. Early infestations could indicate environmental conditions conducive to infestation, which may mean more widespread issues than normal. Blackberry fields will still be at risk for impactful infestations through September meaning there is a much wider window for infestations to occur and ramp-up in places we don't normally see them hit threshold. Miticides were likely warranted in many locations by Mid-July, which could mean that populations may bounce back by late August. Miticide applications are warranted once the

early signs of broad mite are widespread (Picture 2 and Picture 3), or when more advanced injury is observed (Picture 1). It's possible that some fields could warrant additional miticide applications.

Agents and growers need to be on the lookout for this pest in plantings across the Midsouth. Please take a look at our fact sheet "[Managing Broad Mite in Commercial Blackberry Production](#)" for more information about the biology of broad mite, how to monitor it in your plantings, and what options for control exist. Like always, give me a call anytime if you have any questions or suspect you are dealing with this pest.

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Picture 2. Early signs of broad mite injury in blackberry. Terminal leaves first exhibit decreased internode length, a slight bronze color, and terminal ends begin to point upwards (Left image). More advanced broad mite feeding injury is identified by leaves with edges that begin to fold or tips of leaves turn inward (Right Image). Photos by Aaron Cato and Ryan Keiffer.



Picture 3 – 1-5 Rating scale for broad mite damage. A rating of 1 has no shortened internodes or leaf cupping. A 2 rating indicates leaf bronzing, reduced internode length and the beginning of leaf cupping or upturned leaves. A rating of “3” exhibits excessive leaf cupping and a rating of 4 indicates that leaves are beginning to become necrotic. A rating of 5 indicates tip-dieback and excessive necrosis of new leaves. Photos by Ryan Keiffer, Jared Linn, and Aaron Cato.