



May 11, 2007

CHECK FOR BAGWORMS

As a local cemetery was being cleaned up near Saline Center this year, caretakers noticed thin tops in the spruce trees and small bags hanging from the trees. Does your cedar windbreak seem thin? Are some of your juniper landscape plants beginning to look sick? Have you noticed bag-like things hanging from the branches? If so, you may have an infestation of bagworms! I am not talking about tent caterpillars that make a web, bagworms are different than this.

In mid-to-late summer of 2002, a large infestation of this insect was discovered in Southeast Nebraska. The infestation is still a problem. They can destroy cedar windbreaks, landscape trees, and low-growing landscape foundation plantings if not controlled. They are now established throughout Saline County and we really need to watch our windbreaks closely or we could lose them (cedars and spruce).

If someone owns a high pressure sprayer that can cover trees or invents a special blower and wants to pick up some extra work this June, give me a call. We have no local businesses that are spraying large trees that I am aware of.

In late-May to mid-June, the bagworm eggs hatch. If you are not seeing worms on your trees/shrubs, pick some bagworm bags from your plants and place in a plastic zip lock-style bag overnight. Check the next morning, if you have worms crawling, it is time to treat.

Ten days after hatch (end of May and beginning of June) is the best time to spray for control because chemical can come in direct contact with larvae before they begin forming the protective bag. Be sure to continue checking trees because hatches are often staggered and you may need to spray again. The first week in June should be a good rule of thumb.

Use integrated pest management (IPM) control. Bagworm infestations on smaller trees and shrubs can be controlled by removing bags before the eggs begin to hatch. Destroy the bags by crushing, immersing in soapy water or burning. If bags containing larvae are simply discarded on the ground, the larvae may return to your tree or any nearby plant. Each bag with eggs can potentially have 300-500 worms that will attack the tree foliage.

Chemical controls are effective if applied during the early stages of development. For most effective insecticidal control and prevention of damage to trees and shrubs, apply sprays from early-to-mid-June. Because of the 3 or 4 week hatching period, two spray applications, two weeks apart, may be warranted for maximum control of heavy infestations. The following insecticides are registered for home owner control of bagworms. A partial product list includes Bacillus Thuringiensis (Dipel 2X) which is a bacteria that harms certain worms, Carbaryl (Sevin 50WP), BiFenthrin, and Malathion (Malathion 57EC). Do not use Malathion on Canaerti juniper and do not apply Malathion when temperatures are above 85 degrees. Other choices for homeowners include Permethrin (Eight 2.5EC), Dimethoate (Cygon 2E), Fluvalinate (Mavrik 2F) or Acephate (Orthene 9.4%EC). Do not apply Orthene to elm, crabapple, maple, cottonwood, redbud or weigelia. Orthene is a very good treatment with excellent results because of systemic activity but



it may be hard to find. Other products that require a pesticide applicator license include Astro, Decathlon, Ficam, Mavrik, Pounce, Scimitar, Talstar and Tempo. Always be sure and follow all label directions if a pesticide is used.

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