

CHECK TREES FOR BAGWORMS AND SPIDER MITES

I know I discussed bagworms a couple of months ago, but driving around southeast Nebraska has me concerned about a number of trees and windbreaks being heavily infested with them. Bagworms are primarily a pest of cedar trees and junipers, but they are frequently found in spruce trees as well. Under very severe infestations they may even be on deciduous trees and shrubs. Cedar trees infested with bagworms turn a gray and eventually brown color as bagworms feed on the needles of the trees. I have seen a number of windbreaks that have this appearance. You still may be able to save these trees if they have not been defoliated too much and if they are treated with an insecticide soon. It is important to know if you actually have bagworms. Check these trees for infestations of bagworms and the bags on the trees. If you don't see any, and your trees are turning brown, you may have spider mites.

If you do have bagworms, there are several types of sprays that can be used for control of the bagworm this time of year. If you want to use something natural, BT is effective in controlling bagworms and can be purchased as Dipel from most garden centers. The small larvae can be controlled chemically by Sevin, Eight, DeltaGard, Orthene or Malathion, among other things. If you wait until August and the larvae are 2" long and inside their bags, chemical control will be very poor and your trees may even die. There is also information on the web about bagworms at: <http://lancaster.unl.edu/hort/bagworms.shtml>.

The other pest that could be affecting evergreen trees in southeast Nebraska may be spider mites. I have identified infestations of this pest this growing season as well. Spider mites are very small. If you have some of your junipers, spruce or other ornamentals turning yellow or brown, you may have an infestation of spider mites. One method to determine if you have spider mites is to take a sheet of white paper and hold it under a branch that is looks suspicious. Then tap the branch a few times overtop the paper. If you have spider mites there will be hundreds of small specks that fall on the paper. Then they will start to move on the paper. Spider mites are very small and they are about the size of a pinhead or smaller. In the fall and spring when the weather is cooler, the spruce spider mites infest and feed on spruce trees. Now when the weather warms up and it gets hot, the two-spotted spider mite will be feeding on several species of trees, shrubs and crops. Control of spider mites can be achieved by horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, Bifenazate or systemic insect killers. If you have questions, feel free to contact me at the Nemaha County Extension office, (402) 274-4755 or your local Extension office.

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