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EC1557 Evergreen Bagworms

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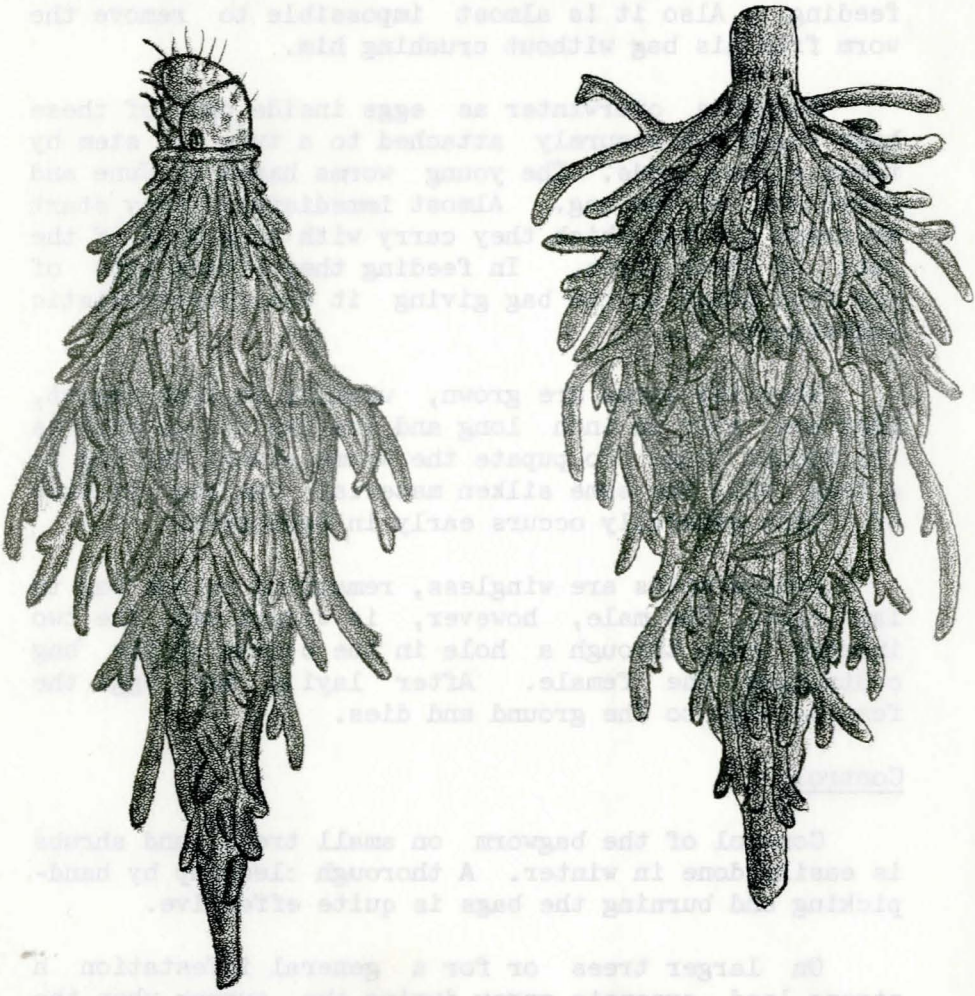
EVERGREEN BAGWORMS



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, AND THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING, H.G. GOULD ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, LINCOLN.

EVERGREEN BAGWORMS

Jack W. Lomax, Extension Entomologist

Evergreen bagworms are the larva of a small brown moth. They are identified by the sack that envelopes them. This sack appears to be made up of many tiny twigs and leaves of the plant on which the worm is feeding. Also it is almost impossible to remove the worm from his bag without crushing him.

Bagworms overwinter as eggs inside one of these bags which is securely attached to a twig or stem by tough silken cords. The young worms hatch in June and crawl out of the bag. Almost immediately they start spinning the bag which they carry with them most of the rest of their lives. In feeding they attach bits of the food plant to the bag giving it its characteristic appearance.

When the worms are grown, usually in late August, they are over an inch long and the bag is as much as two inches long. To pupate the worms attach the bag to a twig with the same silken material the bag is made of. This generally occurs early in September.

Female moths are wingless, remaining in the bag to lay eggs. The male, however, is winged and the two insects mate through a hole in the bottom of the bag containing the female. After laying her eggs the female drops to the ground and dies.

Control:

Control of the bagworm on small trees and shrubs is easily done in winter. A thorough clean-up by hand-picking and burning the bags is quite effective.

On larger trees or for a general infestation a strong lead arsenate spray during the summer when the worms are less than half grown should be used. At least four pounds of insecticide to 50 gallons of water would be needed. Double this amount for large worms.