

Running Out of Time for Bagworm Control

Bagworms have been feeding on landscape plant material for several weeks now. If you have an infestation, the bags and damage should be very noticeable at this time.

Insecticide applications applied now in late summer when bagworms are larger, will be less effective in controlling them. Bifenthrin will work in early August. Use the higher dosage rate. Bifenthrin is also an irritant. It causes bagworms to move around, exposing them further to the insecticide.

By mid to late August, chemical control is no longer effective, since most bagworms will have stopped feeding and pupated in their bags.

— Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate



Mature larva

Soni Cochran, UNL Extension in Lancaster County



Completed bag in which a bagworm pupates.



Bagworm damage to spruce



FOR MORE INFORMATION
Additional photos and video are online at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/hort> and color brochures are available at the extension office.

Harvesting and Preserving Herbs

Becky Seth
Naturalist, Pioneers Park Nature Center

Preserving the bounty of summer provides a lift to the spirit in the gray days of winter. The tastes and smells of herbs can be a special gift on a cold day.

Optimum harvesting times depend on the individual herb and the part of the plant involved. If you are harvesting for culinary purposes it is best to harvest before the plant blooms and in the morning as soon as the dew is dried, since the essential oils are at their peak then. Most herbs benefit from being harvested often since cutting encourages new growth and delays flowering. You can harvest as much as the top half of herbs such as mint, tarragon, basil, sage, oregano and thyme. Harvest the outer leaves of herbs like parsley and sorrel that grow from a central point. Cut chives about one inch from the ground. Trim the branch tips of woody perennials such as rosemary, making sure there is green growth below. Herbs such as dill, fennel and coriander can be grown for both the leaves and seeds. If growing for seed, you can harvest a few lower leaves, but then allow the seed head to turn brown before snipping it off.

To clean your herbs, swish them gently through water and pat dry. Your harvest can then be dried on screens, in the oven at the very lowest setting, or in a food dehydrator. I prefer to

freeze or process them. Mince the herbs and place them loosely in a jar or bag to freeze. You can also cover minced herbs with water or whirl them in the blender with water and put them in ice cube trays, yielding little nuggets of flavor to add to soups and stews.

Herbal flavors can also be preserved in oil or vinegar. Simply tear or bruise the leaves and fill a jar with them. Cover with olive or vegetable oil or wine-based vinegar and store for about two weeks in a warm dark place. Strain the oil or vinegar, put in decorative bottles and add fresh decorative sprigs of herbs. Oils and vinegars can be made from a single herb or a combination.

Making pesto is another great way to preserve the taste of herbs for later use. Although basil pesto is most common, try

making pesto from other herbs as well, particularly cilantro, tarragon, oregano and sage. Pesto freezes well.

Herbs for potpourri or decorative uses such as lavender, artemesias and yarrow are harvested when flowering but before the blooms are fully open. Cut them with enough stem so that you can strip the lower leaves from the stem and gather them into small bunches. Tie the bunches with string or a rubber band and hang them upside down on wire clothes hangers. Place them in a warm, dry place where there is air circulation. If dust is a problem you can place the bunches in paper bags. Punch holes in the bags to increase circulation. Scented geranium leaves can be dried in a similar way. Collect rose petals in full bloom and screen dry.



The Louise Evans Doole Herb Garden at Pioneers Park Nature Center has over 175 kinds of herbs, many of them labeled. Visitors can enjoy the garden from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday.

A Morning with Herbs

Saturday, Aug. 15 • 9:30–11:45 a.m.
Pioneers Park Nature Center Prairie Building
\$10/person • Register by Aug. 10

Pioneers Park Nature Center
Phone: 441-8708 • Fax: 441-6468
Mailing Address: 2740 'A' Street, Lincoln, NE 68502

Join us for two workshops highlighting the versatility of herbs.

9:30 a.m. workshop: Clean with Green (Cleaners, that is) with Cynthia Conner
Demonstrations, "secret ingredients" and a sample to take home (please bring a small container with lid) should pique your gentler nature.

10:45 a.m. workshop: Sizzling Sauces with Janet Buck and Becky Seth
Explore herbal sauces from several ethnic cuisines that will add new flavors to your cooking. Demonstrations, recipes and samples.

Garden Guide

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH
By Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

Check deciduous trees for fall webworm. Use a broom or rake to get them out of small trees.

Check on water needs of hanging baskets daily in the summer. Wind and sun will dry them much more quickly than other containers.

Every weed that produces seed means more trouble next year. Control weeds before they go to seed.

Remove old vegetable plants which have stopped producing to eliminate a shelter for insects and disease organisms.

Hand pick bagworms from your evergreen and deciduous trees.

Clean up fallen rose and peony leaves. They can harbor disease and insect pests over the winter if allowed to remain on the ground.

Mound soil over the lateral or brace roots of corn stalks for extra support against strong winds.

Pick summer squash and zucchini every day or two to keep the plants producing.

Water the garden early in the day so plants can absorb the moisture before the hot sun dries the soil. Early watering also insures that the foliage dries before night. Wet foliage at night increases susceptibility to fungus diseases.

Many herbs self-sow if the flowers are not removed. Dill produce seeds that fall around the parent plant and come up as volunteers the following spring.

To reduce the number of pests on your fruit tree for the coming year, pick up and destroy all fallen fruit.

Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is used by many gardeners to protect cole crops from chewing caterpillars.

White flies are attracted to yellow, so use yellow sticky boards to reduce their populations.

Do not add weeds with mature seed heads to the compost pile. Many weed seeds can remain viable and germinate next year when the compost is used.

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