

Local Bagworm Control Initiative

Last year Lancaster County Horticulture Extension Staff and Lancaster Master Gardeners received hundreds of calls on bagworms. To help educate the public on this serious problem and its control we have formed a plan. Over the next few months you will see monthly reminders on what you can do to deal with this issue.

Please take a walk through your landscape and check all your plant material, especially spruce and junipers. During the months of March, April and early May, the only means of control is hand picking the bags from your plants. Place them in a bag and put the sealed bag in the trash. If you have large trees or too many bagworms to effectively pick off your plants, chemical control will be needed after they hatch in June.

—Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate



Once the eggs hatch in early June, large bagworm populations can completely defoliate and kill evergreens during summer.

Since deciduous plants grow new leaves each year, the defoliation caused by bagworms feeding usually does not kill them.



On a Juniper



On a Spruce



On a Crabapple

All photos taken in Lancaster County, Fall 2008 by Extension Associates Mary Jane Frogge and Soni Cochran

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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HortUpdate is a FREE e-mail newsletter from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension which provides timely information to the lawn and landscape industry. This e-mail includes current lawn and landscape problems with control recommendations and a seasonal 'To Do' list. To subscribe, go to <http://extensionhorticulture.unl.edu>



2009 Great Plants Selections



Cornelian cherry dogwood



Creeping mahonia

The Great Plants program is a joint effort of the Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum that selects and promotes exceptional plants. These plants are reliably hardy, easy to care for and ornamentally worthwhile.

Tree of the Year Cornelian cherry dogwood, "Cornus mas"

Durable small tree, with rounded clusters of tiny yellow flowers in early spring before leaves appear, dark green leaves and bright cherry red fruit in late summer. The olive-shaped fruits are relished by songbirds or can be used to make jam or jelly. Bark is an attractive mix of gray and brown that exfoliates on mature branches. The main trunk is typically very low, with low branches hovering just above the ground. It can be trimmed up at the base to make it more tree-like and better reveal the exfoliating bark. This slow-growing European native remains free of insect, disease and cold injuries. It

prefers rich, well-drained soils, but tolerates high pH and heavy clay better than any dogwood. Ideal for a small yard as an accent plant or planted in groups as a hedge or screen. It grows best in full sun, but tolerates some shade.

Shrub of the Year Creeping mahonia, "Mahonia repens"

This stoloniferous groundcover grows along the rocky ridges and under the thick evergreen canopy of western Nebraska's Pine Ridge. Stiff, spine-tipped leaves, reminiscent of holly, turn a rich bronzy purple in late fall through the winter. This plant has fragrant, yellow flowers in early spring, followed by small clusters of grape-like, dark bluish-purple berries in late summer. Planted in masses, it spreads slowly to make an attractive evergreen groundcover, but



Arkansas bluestar

grows best in part shade or dry shade, especially under conifers. Growing only 12–15 inches high, this drought-tolerant gem is best protected from winter winds that can burn the foliage.

Perennial of the Year Arkansas bluestar, "Amsonia hubrichtii"

Excellent, dependable plant with upright stems that emerge in early spring and rapidly extend to mature size. Plants are topped with starry, pale blue flowers in May and June. Fine, thread-like dark green leaves unfold along the thin stems to form a very fine-textured mound of foliage. In autumn, the foliage turns a lovely golden-yellow and is at its brightest when planted in full sun. Takes several years to grow into an attractive mound, but dependable and long-lived in rich, well-drained soils.

Grass of the Year Shenandoah switchgrass, "Panicum Shenandoah"

Bright green leaves of this switchgrass are tipped with dark red by mid-summer, turning entirely red and orange in fall. Only 4 to 5 feet tall in flower, this slower-growing selection is very adaptable, tolerating drought and soggy soils, high pH and full, hot sun. One of the best grasses for maintaining upright habit and tight clump form in the garden. Plant as a single specimen, in masses or as a companion to perennials with bold foliage.

Source: Nebraska Statewide Arboretum



Shenandoah switchgrass

Garden Guide THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

Complete the pruning of shrubs, ornamental trees before growth starts, except for spring flowering shrubs. Prune those which bloom in spring as soon as they finish flowering.

If you have not done it already, check stored tools and outdoor furniture for signs of rust. Remove any surface rust with steel wool and paint with rust preventing paint.

Turn the compost pile.

Start transplants indoors of tomatoes, peppers and eggplant.

Pick a permanent spot for herbs in the garden.

Place birdhouses built this winter outdoors this month. Birds will begin looking for nesting sites soon.

Do not plow your garden when the soil is wet. It will form clods which are difficult to break up and interfere with cultivation during the summer.

Plan your vegetable garden on a sheet of paper to utilize the space most efficiently. Remember to rotate the vegetables in the garden to reduce insect and disease problems.

Buy a notebook and use it to keep all your gardening information. List what you plant in the garden. Include the name of seed companies, plant name, variety, planting date and harvest date. During the growing season keep notes on how well the plant does. If the variety is susceptible to disease, record what was used to treat any problems. All this information will be helpful in planning future gardens.

Rake the lawn to remove leaves and twigs.

Some annuals, such as verbenas, snapdragons and petunias, take 70 to 90 days to bloom. They should be started indoors in early spring.

Buy some new perennials for your flower border. Spring is a good time to renew and add variety to your landscape.

How are your houseplants doing? Check all five growing factors if your house plants are not growing well. Light, temperature, nutrients, moisture and humidity must be favorable to provide good growth.

Finish repairing and painting of window boxes, lawn furniture, tools and other items in preparation for outdoor gardening and recreational use.