

Time to Look for Bagworms

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Bagworms have become a serious pest in Lancaster County. Bagworm larvae hatched in late May and have been feeding on plant material for over a month. They are about half of their mature size.

Take a walk through your landscape or windbreak and check all your landscape plants, especially spruce and junipers. If you find an outbreak of bagworms, chemical control may be needed. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) is available at nurseries and garden centers as Dipel or Thuricide. Other insecticides currently labeled for bagworm control include acephate, carbaryl, cyfluthrin, malathion and permethrin. Be sure to read and follow all label directions.



Bagworm feeding on spruce tree in mid-July.

If you have a large infestation in your evergreen trees or shrubs, do not delay in controlling the bagworms. Feeding by mature caterpillars slows in August before pupation into adults, so chemical control

in late summer and fall is not effective. By that time, your valuable landscape plants or windbreak are already severely damaged by the maturing bagworms.

Backyard Farmer Show

Backyard Farmer (BYF) is Nebraska's place to go for all of your gardening information for over 65 seasons. BYF airs on Thursday's, at 7 p.m. CT, from April to September on NET1.

BYF repeats Saturdays at 10 a.m. on NET, Sundays at 3 p.m. and Mondays at 5 p.m. on CREATE.

Backyard Farmer is dedicated to helping you find solutions to your lawn and garden questions. Every year from spring to fall, our panel of experts deals with topics from insect pests, disease, turf and fruits and vegetables, as well as landscape design and general horticulture topics.

BACKYARD FARMER

5 Tips for Working Remotely from Home and Caring for Children During COVID-19

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If we could press rewind and go back in time to mid-March, I wonder what we would have been doing. The sudden and abrupt transition to working from home and having to juggle roles of employee, parent and teacher all at once was certainly something most of us were not prepared for. Most of us had little time to plan how we would design our work space, daily schedules and balance work and family under one roof. If this sounds like your "new normal," you are not alone. I have found some helpful tips and words of encouragement I would like to pass along from a recent article by Holly Hatton-Bowers and Carrie L. Hanson-Bradley, Assistant Professors at the University of Nebraska.

TIP 1: Acknowledge Emotions

Emotions are normal and healthy and give us clues to what we may need to feel better.

Dr. Dan Siegel says it can be helpful to "name it to tame it." We often feel emotions in our bodies first, such as tightness in our chest or a stiff neck. Siegel advises us to stop for a minute, pay attention to what we feel in our bodies and then name our emotion. The authors recommended saying, "My body feels... and the emotion I am experiencing is..."

Keep in mind that emotions are not forever, "name it, tame it" and move on. Judging ourselves for having emotions only makes us feel worse.

TIP 2: Manage Expectations

It is difficult to juggle all of your roles at the same time, so do not expect to be able to fulfill all the roles you play at the same level you did before COVID-19. It can be helpful to understand each individual manages change differently; and this is particularly true as families adjust to the newness of working from home, parenting and teaching at the same time. Some will embrace it as a new opportunity for creativity while others can feel overwhelmed.

What about Parenting Expectations?

Daily routines will be different for each individual family. Whether it be educational activities, or family time together, what young children need more than ever right now is time to connect, cuddle, have a routine with some flexibility and to feel safe.

Can you find ways to make every day activities fun for your child? Perhaps the family meal time could turn into a picnic on the floor. Maybe you could make a game of sorting socks when doing the laundry. Try and be intentional about when you need to work and when to play or be with your children. It's like putting deposits in the bank, when children

receive moments of our undivided attention, then they are more likely to feel okay when parents need to move away to focus on work.

TIP 3: Create a Schedule

Sit down and create a schedule that works for your family. Keeping in mind it is good to allow for flexibility. Schedule in work time and time for household chores. Time for children to play and do chores and school work too. If there are two parents in the home, the adults could alternate work hours so as to keep children safe as well as giving them the parent connection time they need most.



TIP 4: Practice Self-Care

It is healthy to take time away to focus on what you need as an adult. Yet, when we are under stress, self-care is one of the first things that gets pushed aside. Here are a few strategies for self-care:

- Listening to music
- Taking time to virtually connect with friends and family
- Spend time in nature
- Exercise
- Practice deep breathing or meditation
- Eating healthy
- Reading or drawing
- Getting adequate sleep and waking up at the same time each day
- Practice positive thinking and/or practice gratitude

TIP 5: Be Gentle with Yourself

We are collectively experiencing a worldwide crisis, and crises trigger our brains into fight, flight or freeze mode. That means our brains are focused on surviving, not thriving. So it is normal to feel like you aren't functioning at your peak level. Have you felt forgetful lately, not as motivated or find yourself not knowing what day it is? It may be your brain's way of protecting you in this time of stress.

Soon, you will be able to look back on this time and process what has happened, but in-depth processing happens only after you feel emotionally and physically safe. So in this time of crisis, be gentle with yourself (and with others). Self-compassion creates space where mistakes are viewed as valuable learning opportunities, tiny victories call for huge celebrations and we can acknowledge our suffering without criticizing ourselves for being human.



GARDEN GUIDE

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

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In July, a garden needs one inch of rain or water each week. Early morning is the best time to water. Evening watering is less desirable because plant leaves that remain wet through the night are more susceptible to fungus diseases. Mulch plants to reduce water losses and improve yields.

Check the soil moisture of container-grown vegetables and flowers daily. As the temperature rises, some plants may need water twice a day.

Many plants are easily propagated by layering in July. Euonymus, verbenas, English ivy and climbing roses are a few plants that will root if the stems are fastened down and covered with soil.

For fall harvest of lettuce, radish, carrots, beets, turnips, kale and spinach, sow seeds in late July to early August.

Continue to make successive plantings of crops like beans and sweet corn to provide a continuous harvest until fall. A small garden will produce a large quantity of vegetables if replanting is done throughout the summer.

A brown or grayish cast over a lawn can be caused by dull or improperly adjusted mower blades that shred grass rather than cut it.

Store pesticides in a safe place in their original containers, away from children and pets. Use pesticides carefully in your garden. Read the labels and follow the directions. The warnings and precautions are for your protection.

Certain pesticides have a waiting period of several days between the time of the last spray and harvest. Read and follow directions on all labels before applying to your vegetable crops. Wash all produce thoroughly before use.

For maximum landscape interest in a small, vertical space, try annual vines. They can disguise ugly walls and fences. When trellised, they can create shade and privacy while hiding undesirable views. Try morning glory, nasturtium vine and scarlet runner bean.

Cutting flowers is best done with sharp pruners which will help avoid injury to the growing plant. A slanting cut will expose a larger absorbing surface to water and will prevent the base of the stem from resting on the bottom of the vase. It is best to carry a bucket of water to the garden for collecting flowers.