

BAGWORMS

The cases of these insects often attract attention when found in Florida homes. We usually see only the cases of the bagworm hanging on walls and tresses in south and central Florida. Bagworms are larvae and are rarely seen outside their bags. To make the bag, the larva secretes silk to build an arch, and very small particles of sand, soil, iron rust, insect droppings, arthropod remains, hairs, and other fibers are added on the outside. A fully developed larva (caterpillar) has a case up to 2 inches in length.

When found on plants, bagworms consume the entire needle or leaf, leaving only the needle sheath or mid-rib. If infestations are heavy enough, they will strip trees and shrubs, causing branch dieback or death. They usually feed on one branch at a time, and often a good indication of damage is the presence of bags suspended from twigs and branches.



In most cases, bagworm outbreaks are quickly reduced by low winter temperatures, since they only have one cycle a year. In addition, a number of parasitic wasps have been found in bagworms. On ornamentals around the home, a practical method to control bagworms is by picking and destroying the bags. Chemical control is also effective by using Bt and other approved insecticides. If bagworms are inside the house, using the air conditioner to maintain a lower indoor humidity can offer control. Also, since indoor bagworms feed on spider webs, manual picking or vacuuming of cases and spider web removal should be enough to keep bagworms under control.

SIZE |—————|
Up to 2 inches

From UF featured creatures website
http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/urban/occas/p_bagworm.htm and
<http://fhpr8.srs.fs.fed.us/idotis/insects/bagworm.html>