

Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



Department of Entomology
123 West Waters Hall
K-State Research and Extension
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
785-532-5891
<http://www.entomology.ksu.edu/extension>

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BAGWORMS – 2014

Ask almost any Kansas homeowner, “What is the Number 1 insect problem that you most worry about every year?”, a likely response would be, “BAGWORMS!” Especially wherever evergreen landscape plantings are concerned, bagworms get in “their licks” before many people are even aware of their presence. For some who have “been burned”, the question that they most often ask is, “Have bagworms hatched? Is it time to spray for bagworms?”

If people make the effort to closely monitor their individual plantings, they will know when current-season activities begin. Those who do not monitor then must rely of the observations of others. While some choose to associate certain phenological events with the initiation of bagworm activities, others chose to monitor plantings for the actual hatch and presence of bagworm larvae.

I choose the latter, checking on a daily basis. And on Saturday, March 17, the first bagworm larvae appeared here in Manhattan.

As indicated in a previous Kansas Insect Newsletter, what is reported from Manhattan does not necessarily apply throughout the state. That is, further south and southeast, activities may have begun earlier, while in the north/northwest regions, activities likely have yet to begin.

How important is it to know the exact date-of-onset for bagworm activities? From the standpoint of initiating current season spray programs against bagworms, date-of-onset is not critical. Because of an extended hatching period over a period of 3-5 weeks (a possible peak at the halfway point), there is little reason to grab-and-spray at the first appearance of newly-emerged larvae. Some individuals may feel that by treating early (at the onset), their work-is-done, and they can put the sprayer back in storage. Yet, all that they have dealt with was the proverbial “tip-of-the-iceberg”. The bulk of the hatch (yet-



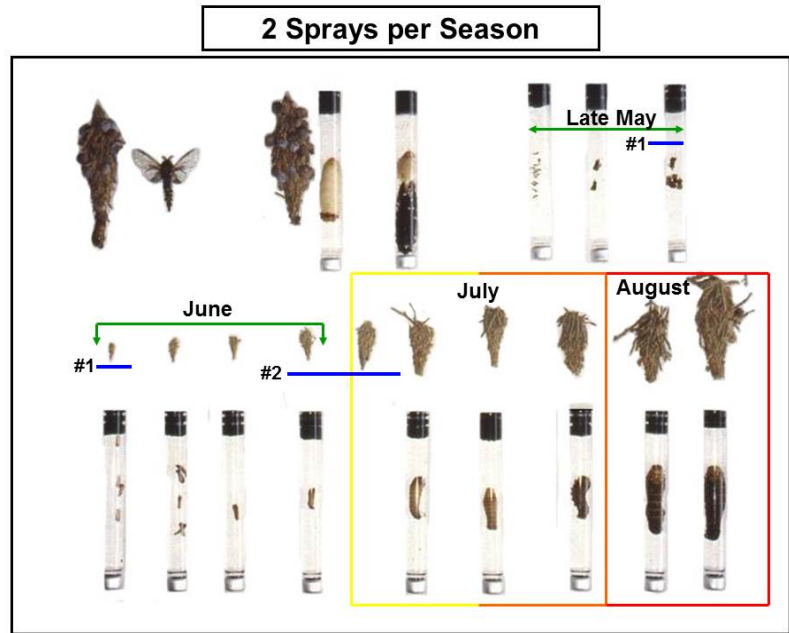
Photo Credit: Phil Sloderbeck

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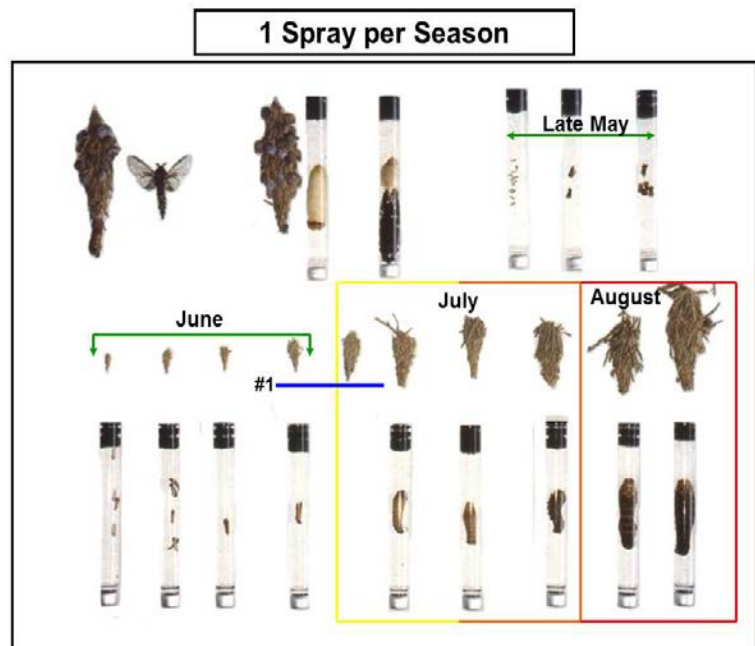
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to-come) will have free reign. Unseen bagworms will nibble and grow. And when larvae reach their final developmental stage, they will rapidly devour foliage to complete their feeding phase. THAT IS WHEN THEY GIVE AWAY THEIR PRESENCE --- when cedars and junipers (and sometimes spruce) take on the “burnt appearance”.

While it is not necessary to spray immediately, if an individual is determined to do so, at least wait until the end of May or first week of June to eliminate the head-end of the hatch. BUT BE REPAIRED TO SPRAY A SECOND TIME at the end of June to first week of July to eliminate the remainder of the hatch. (Blue lines)



For most people, a single spray treatment is preferred. That treatment should be applied at the end of June to first week of July (Blue line). At that time, all eggs should have hatched. While the larvae which hatched first will have progressed into their third larval instars, they will not have had the capability of inflicting visible damage. And of course, later emerging larvae, less damage yet.



An often asked question is, “What is the best insecticide to use against bagworms?” More important than what product used is, **HOW THE PRODUCT IS USED**. Hastily-applied quick-to-get-it-done sprays amount to mist-like treatments which control only those bagworms on the periphery of trees/shrubs. Rather, slow methodical treatments with sprayer wands thrust into interior portions of plantings will provide the

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THOROUGH COVERAGE required to effectively eliminate entire bagworm populations. This may mean having to refill sprayers depending on the number and size of trees/shrubs requiring treatment(s)

Currently in Kansas, there are 486 insecticidal products registered for use on bagworms and bagworm larvae. Shop the shelves of local retail outlets for product availability. As always, it is incumbent on end-users to read product labels to ensure the safe and proper use of insecticide

Bob Bauernfeind

Wheat Head Armyworms

Wheat head armyworms are becoming more common, and thus, more conspicuous throughout north central and south central Kansas. This insect is only a very minor pest most years, but there are always a few (<1%) infesting most wheat fields. They are not usually a problem; however, occasionally populations can occur to such an extent as to cause some damage to kernels in the field. Sometimes their feeding on the kernels may even result in wheat being downgraded by the buyers because of what they refer to as 'insect-damaged kernels' (IDK). Some of the fields sampled this week had numbers of these larvae (see photo 1) that are a little higher than usual. The typical feeding position of these larvae (see photo 2 & 3) is seen in this field where they are feeding directly on the grain. These pests are not common enough to have caused us to develop any kind of management or control recommendations. They also occur late enough relative to the development of the wheat that insecticide applications would be rather 'iffy' and the post-harvest interval (PHI) of any insecticide selected would need to be carefully monitored to ensure label compliance.



Photo 1

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Photo 2



Photo3

Jeff Whitworth

Holly Davis-Schwartzing

Insect Diagnostic Laboratory Report

<http://entomology.k-state.edu/extension/diagnostician/recent-samples.html>

Eva Zurek

Sincerely,

Robert J. Bauernfeind
Extension Specialist
Horticultural Entomology
phone: 785/532-4752
e-mail: rbauernf@ksu.edu

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Jeff Whitworth
Extension Specialist
Field Crops
phone: 785/532-5656
e-mail: jwhitwor@ksu.edu

Holly Davis-Schwarding
Research Associate
Phone: (785) 532-4739
e-mail: holly3@ksu.edu

Eva Zurek
Insect Diagnostician
Phone: (785) 532-4710
e-mail: ezurek@ksu.edu



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