Bagworms, It’s Still Too Early to Spray

We all know that timing is critical to many things in our lives, including controlling bagworms. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but it’s still too early to spray for bagworms.

Though handpicking is effective through much of the year, often it is impractical because of the sheer number of bagworms. However, if you only see a few bags, now would be a good time to pick them off and destroy them. As mentioned above, large populations of bagworms can make handpicking impractical. In such cases, spraying is recommended. New bagworms will likely hatch and leave the mother’s bag in May, but spraying is usually not recommended until June. Spraying now will be ineffective because the young are too well protected inside their mother’s bag.

Bagworms only have one generation a year, and this makes controlling them a lot easier to do. Their eggs will be completely hatched and out by June 10th. So, we should target our spraying for the last three weeks of June and even into the first week of July.

K-State Extension Horticulture specialist recommend the other keys to successfully spraying for bagworms (along with timing) is a thorough coverage of spray. You must penetrate the canopy of the trees you are spraying to truly impact the entire infestation. As far as what to spray, anything that is labeled for use on bagworm control will do a good job. Our top recommendation these days is a ‘Spinosad’, a relatively safe and effective control that stops bagworms in their tracks. One of the formulations of Spinosad that can be found on the shelves of local nurseries and garden centers is ‘Captain Jack’s Dead Bug Brew’. While you are now educated on what and how to spray for bagworms, be prepared and WAIT until June before you spray, or you will probably be reapplying later in the summer.

**We know that our world continues to change throughout this time dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, but one thing that will remain the same is K-State Research and Extension’s mission to serve and educate our local Kansas communities. As our Greenwood County Courthouse is currently still restricting in-person access, this also limits our in-person office availability during this time. But the Extension office is still here to serve our community! Our office remains open and is available via phone (office number is 620-583-7455) or by email at lindsayshorter@ksu.edu. We are still available in-person through appointments and can be arranged by calling the Extension office. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education and our Greenwood County 4-H program.**