

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



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PHOTO BY William M. Johnson

Webworms produce a spider-like maze of webs that envelope leaves near the tips of branches. Webworms feed voraciously as a family group on the foliage contained within the spider-like webs. While they prefer mulberry and pecan, webworms will feed on a wide variety of other landscape trees and shrubs.

July has arrived and that means heat and humidity are settling in as the summer season gets underway. Most of us put our gardens into a holding pattern in July. We just try to keep the bugs and weeds at bay and to keep cool. Here's your gardening checklist for July.

WEED CONTROL SEMINAR: Do you have a bumper crop of something growing in landscape beds this spring

that you did not plant? Is your lawn more weeds than grass? What can you do about problem weeds that are taking over your yard?

Master Gardener Anna Wygrys will provide a seminar on Saturday, July 25, from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main Street) in La Marque. Preregistration

is requested by e-mail (GALV3@wt.net) or telephone (281-534-3413, ext. 12) to ensure availability of handout material.

Discussion topics will include the most common weed problems in local landscapes and gardens, chemical and cultural management options, and understanding how weeds gain a foothold in the home landscape.

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News column printed in the Galveston Daily News, The Post, and other Galveston County Newspapers.

CHECK NEW LANDSCAPE TRANSPLANTS:

Even though rainfall has been quite generous over the past few weeks, make periodic inspections on recently planted landscape trees and shrubs to check for adequate soil moisture. The root system a newly planted transplanted tree will not become well-established for some time. During extended periods of dry weather conditions, be sure to water new trees regularly to avoid stressing plants.

TALLER LAWNS: Check the cutting height of your lawn mower. During the heat of Gulf Coast summers, consider raising the lawn mower blade to a higher setting. The higher the cutting height, the less lawn grass is stressed resulting in a healthier lawn.

LOW SPOTS IN THE LAWN: Low areas in the lawn may be gradually filled with shallow applications of good top soil where needed. However, avoid temptation to apply a layer of sand over the entire lawn area just because your neighbor does. This is an excellent way to introduce new weeds, smother your grass and encourage unwanted insects and disease problems.

WEBWORMS AND BAGWORMS: "Do I have webworms or bagworms on my trees and shrubs?" This has been a frequently asked question over the last few

weeks. Webworms are the ones that make the spider-like maze of webs around leaves near the tips of branches and bagworms are the ones that live inside brown bags that they drag along with them for protection.

Both insect pests can be controlled with organic insecticides. Dipel, Bio-worm Killer or other organic spray products containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* is the stuff to use. The caterpillars eat it, become sick almost immediately, stop feeding and then die within a few days.

Bagworms can be somewhat difficult to control, especially as caterpillars become larger. Conventional insecticides currently labeled for bagworm and webworm control include carbaryl, cyfluthrin, malathion and permethrin.

BARK LICE ON TREES: July is the month when many homeowners start reporting the appearance of strange webbing on the trunk and limbs of trees. Several concerned homeowners have already sent e-mails to me with digital photos of bark lice on tree trunks. The webs are produced by colonies of very small insects known as bark lice.

The webs may give trunks and limbs the appearance of being "dressed" in a white stocking. Fortunately, bark lice (which really aren't lice) don't cause any

harm to trees. In fact, they are very beneficial in that they eat lichens and fungi growing on the bark. No control is needed.

HANGING BASKETS: To keep hanging baskets looking attractive, soak the baskets in a tub of water every few days in addition to the regular daily watering. This is also a good time to fertilize baskets but never apply fertilizer to dry plants.

BLACKBERRIES: July is the last month for pruning blackberry canes which promotes secondary shoot growth. Blackberries should be lightly fertilized with a general purpose fertilizer such as 15-5-10 or 21-0-0.

CRAPE MYRTLES: Crape myrtles are putting on a spectacular flower display this year. The flowering period of crape myrtles can be extended by pruning flower heads as soon as possible after they finish flowering.

