



FYN Garden Q & A Series

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FYN Topic: Bagworm, *Thyridopteryx ephemeraeformis*

Question: : We need help identifying the attached photo. It was seen on the boardwalk at 6 Mile Cypress Slough. It looked like some kind of caterpillar using dried leaves as camouflage. Thanks for your help. Suzy

Answer: The plant used as camouflage looks like elm tree leaves. What you are seeing is a bag of stuff the caterpillar forms around itself and keeping it hidden from bird predators. Called a bagworm, *Thyridopteryx ephemeraeformis*, it feeds on elm and hundreds of other plant types both in the slough and nearby yards. Other plants bagworms prefer feeding on include Sea Grape, Pine and Palm fronds. The bags are created by combining silk with leaf pieces, sand, soil, twigs, bark, bird droppings, etc. Bagworms often go unnoticed until a single tree or branch is completely defoliated. In a yard, bagworms can be removed by hand and destroyed. Or, by using a high pressure stream of water which tears apart their bags. This pest is only controlled with sprays like Dipel, Thuricide or Bt when the bags are very small and green.



Bagworm

Useful Links

<http://www.floridayards.org>
<http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu>
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/>
<http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>
<http://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu>

Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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