



## FYN Garden Q & A Series

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Yards & Neighborhoods



### FYN Topic: : Balsam Apple Vine

**Question:** What is this weedy vine covering our coral honeysuckle? How do we get rid of it?  
Marjorie, Ft Myers

**Answer:** This high-climbing vine competes with other vines by growing right through and over top of other plants. This is an old world tropical vine called Balsam Apple (*Momordica charantia*). Its leaves and fruit look like a wild cucumber. Each weedy seedling roots from a seed dropped this year or last. On any fence, it easily scrambles over other vines of fences or hedges.

Fortunately, if you catch it early, you can just pull it out of the plant it covers. It's clinging tendrils break free fairly easily. Physically pull out the corky stems and roots before they set any flower or fruit. Any of the green or yellow cucumber-like fruit should be harvested and destroyed before seeds fall to the ground. Most of its fruits are broadly egg-shaped and ribbed or bumpy-looking. Once the fruit opens, beware! The seeds are mature enough to germinate, extending your problem. If you see sticky orange and bright red pulp, you are too late to catch all the released seeds. Any seeds that come in contact with the soil seem to germinate without fail in warm weather. Once Balsam Apple covers another vine, shrub, wall or fence, it is going to be more difficult to pull off by hand. Be sure to wear gloves.



Mature Seeds



Balsam Apple Fruit

### 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 239-533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:p.m. or by emailing [Extgardener@leegov.com](mailto:Extgardener@leegov.com). Visit his Web page at <http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml>

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