

Bark Psocids (*Archipsocus nomas*)

Current Infestation: Bark psocids (barklice) are found in portions of the Florida interior and along the Florida coasts. Also found in Texas and South Carolina.

Description/Biology: Bark psocids (pronounced so'-sids) are communal web-spinning barklice. Life stages include eggs, nymphs and adults, and there are several generations per year in Florida. Eggs are laid singly or in groups and covered with debris. Bark psocids are soft-bodied insects with chewing mouthparts and long filamentous antennae. They are unlikely to be confused with any other plant dwelling insect.



Adult bark psocid



Bark psocids (without web)

Adults are darker in color than nymphs and are approximately ¼ inch long (6 mm). When winged, the membranous wings are held roof-like over the body.

Nymphs and adults feed primarily on lichens and fungi. They produce a fine webbing on trunks and bare branches.

Seasonality: In early spring, colonies become more frequent. During the summer, colonies rapidly increase in both number and size. Winged females are usually observed only during this time. By early December, populations have been greatly reduced by cool temperatures, and the webs begin to disintegrate due to weathering.

In central Florida, colonies of bark psocids are rare during the winter (December - February).

Hosts: Mostly found on rough bark trees such as:

- Oaks (*Quercus* spp.)
- Silver trumpet tree (*Tabebuia argentea*, *T. aurea*, *T. caraiba*)
- Buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus*)
- Seagrape (*Coccoloba uvifera*)
- Orange geiger (*Cordia sebestena*)

Importance: Bark psocids do not cause tree damage. Therefore they are not considered an important pest. They can be considered beneficial insects since they clean tree bark.

Bark Psocids, (*Archipsocus nomas*)

Damage: During some years bark psocids make extensive silken webs that often cover the trunks and bare branches of trees in the southeastern U.S. The webs are believed to protect the bark psocids from predators.

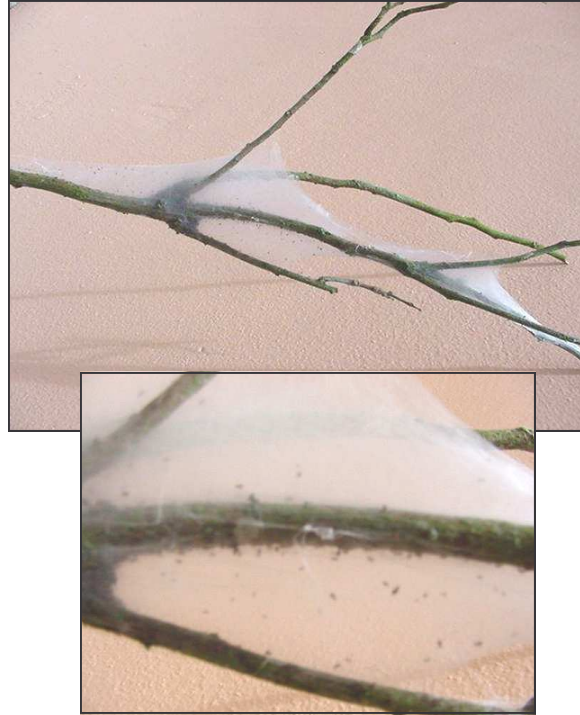
The webs are considered to be unsightly, but neither the bark psocids nor the webs cause any harm to trees.

Psocid webbing should not be confused with tent caterpillars webbing which is found in north and central Florida. Tent caterpillars build their webs around branches and foliage.



Management: Because bark psocids are not destructive, control measures are not recommended. If needed, pressurized water will breakdown the webbing.

When the webbing is removed, the psocids usually move away in a group and are commonly called “tree cattle” because of their herding behavior.



If left undisturbed, bark psocids apparently remove the silken webbing by the end of summer.

Websites:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN553>

<http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/trees/barklouse.htm>

Authors:

Adrian Hunsberger, UF/IFAS, Miami-Dade Extension
Kim Gabel, UF/IFAS, Monroe Extension
Catharine Mannion, UF/IFAS, TREC Homestead
Eileen Buss, UF/IFAS, Entomology Dept., Gainesville
Lyle Buss, UF/IFAS, Entomology Dept., Gainesville

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