

### That Isn't a Pinecone: Bagworms

Those spindle-shaped “pinecones” hanging from your conifers might not be pinecones. Take a closer look. If what you noticed is actually a mass of silk threads covered with bits of bark and foliage, you just spotted a bagworm infestation. Bagworms feed primarily on junipers and arborvitae, although they also attack spruce, willow, black locust, sycamore, apple, maple, elm, poplar, oak, honeylocust and birch...in no particular order.

The telltale sign of an infestation is that pinecone-like silk bag in which 300 – 1000 eggs spend the winter. In late May or early June, the larvae emerge from the bag on lengths of silk that catch the wind and carry each larva to a new host tree. There, the young bagworm begins to spin its own bag. As you may guess, an infestation builds rapidly and can cause a lot of damage: as the larvae feed, they consume the leaves or needles of their hosts, causing stress and branch dieback. Extensive defoliation will eventually cause the host tree to decline and die.



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