

Bagworms¹

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The snail-case bagworm, *Apterona crenulella*, is an unusual moth larva. This small caterpillar lives in a silk case covered with soil particles. The case is about 3/16 inch wide and is shaped like a snail shell. The insect feeds at night. Apparently, only female moths have been reported in the United States, and they can produce eggs that do not require fertilization by a male. Large numbers of caterpillars can develop.

This insect can cause serious plant damage. First found in the western United States about 1940, the bagworm has since spread to most western states including Washington. The caterpillars also feed on many kinds of plants, including alfalfa, apple, Douglas-fir, oats, peas, raspberries, and rose. Snail-case bagworms have also been found on concrete foundations where they were likely eating organic matter.

Solenobia walshella, a bagworm with a small cigar-shaped case, is sometimes found under the eaves of houses and in similar locations. Not much is known about these bagworms; they are suspected of feeding on lichen (small moss-like plants commonly found on bark, branches, fence posts, etc.)

Management

Various insecticides will give good control, but only if they are applied when larvae are actively feeding. The bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) is very selective and kills only caterpillars. Bt is available under several trade names.

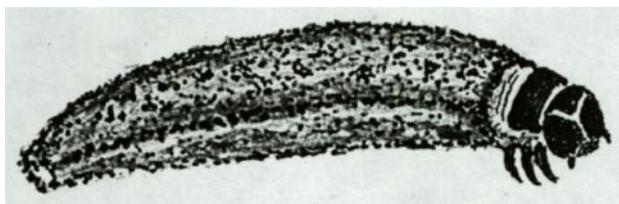


Fig. 1. Cigar bagworm.
By A.L. Antonelli.

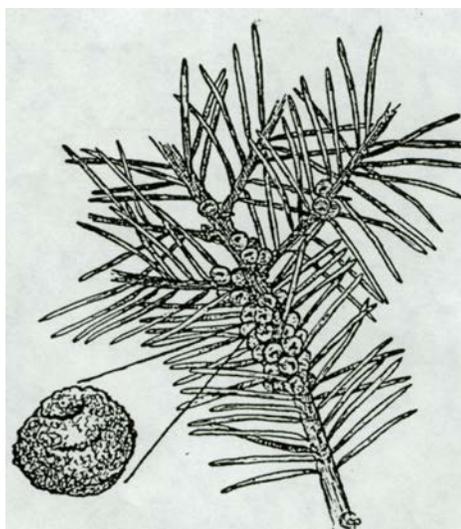


Fig. 2. Snail-case bagworm.
By E.P. Catts.

¹Snail-case bagworm information adapted from "Have You Seen This Bug?" Dan Suomi, WSU, *Entomology Newsletter for County Agents*, No. 2, June 1986.