

by Tricia Battalion

Texas A&M i ongoing battle birds roosting in ter of campus. even be winning Dr. Keith A. sor in the Depa life Science, says which decorate around the Aca with their dropp grackles, starliu birds.

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# Critters at A&M

This campus just wouldn't be the same without the creeping, crawling, slithering, whooshing wildlife that inhabits it. How boring would it be to walk to class without wondering if the birds in the trees are going to

leave their marks on your head? How dull and un-adventurous would your dorm room be without the thrill of victory (with a can of ant and roach killer) or, in most cases, the agony of defeat...? We've decided to bring you a

closer look at those animals, creatures, "disgusting things" (or whatever you want to call them), so that you will be better able to appreciate the "other guys" with whom you share this campus.

## The bagworm has one mission in life

by Pat Allen Battalion reporter

Consider the bagworm. You know, those critters that festoon the shrubbery with neat little packages of leaves and silk and, if there are enough of them, kill the shrub in the process.

The male bagworm has but one mission in life — fathering more bagworms. And the female also has but one — to mother more bagworms. It's scarcely an even deal, however. Once mother bagworm is impregnated by the male, she lays her eggs, lots of them, promptly falls from her baggy home and dies. Papa, meantime, goes his merry way, finding more females wherever he can until

his motley existence is over, presumably from exhaustion.

Bagworms build a durable silken case to live in and to protect their larvae and eggs. The bags are made of layers of leaves, twigs and bark pieces. It has a small opening at the lower end through which the worm expels refuse. A larger opening at the top allows the worm to crawl out to feed and enlarge its bag.

The reproduction process of the bagworm is unusual. A male bagworm pupates (develops from the larval stage into adult stage), leaves his bag as a moth and searches for a mate. The female bagworm pupates, sticks her abdomen out of the bag and waits to be found by the male.

Then Mother Nature takes her course.

The female deposits her eggs in the bag, wiggles out the lower opening, falls to the ground and dies.

Bagworms kill trees and shrubs by eating their leaves. Evergreens, arborvitaes and deciduous trees are the most common victims of the bagworm.

"A real heavy infestation could kill a tree in a week," says Dr. Rodney Holloway, a Texas A&M extension entomologist. "If they're going to be bad, you'll know it. If you see just a couple of bagworms, I wouldn't worry about it, but if there are a lot, I'd recommend spraying an insecticide."

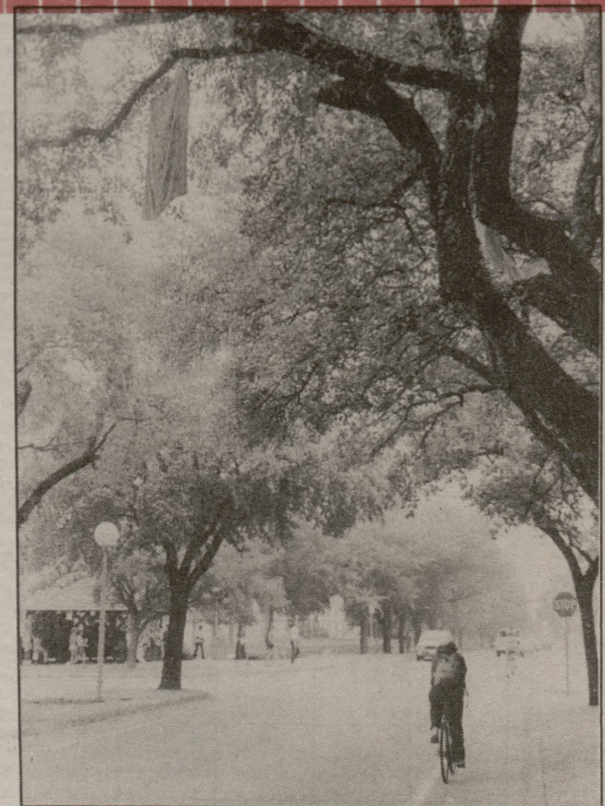


photo by Hope Paasch

## Mission impossible: eradicating roaches

by Chris Cox Battalion reporter

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the kitchen, another one of those pesky critters darts out from under your feet. But don't feel alone...According to Dr. Rodney Holloway of the entomology department, most students experience some type of confrontation with insects such as the household cockroach.

"Most people are going to get roaches 99.95 percent of the time," Holloway says. "It just comes with the territory. If a neighbor has them, the entire complex is going to get them."

Holloway says there are several types of roaches including the Oriental, American, and German varieties. But he says the insect a student will see on a day-to-day basis is the German cockroach.

Students may take a few extra precautions to keep the critters off their premises. Holloway advises keeping a clean apartment or dorm, and making sure

no food is around and all dishes are clean. He also says students should be aware that they can easily transport roaches just by carrying boxes and grocery sacks indoors.

Students can control pest just as well as anyone else can, Holloway says.

"Over-the-counter products work well in fighting them," he says, "but people don't want to take the trouble."

Holloway says pest control workers get most of their calls during the summer months, even though fleas from indoor animals can become a problem even in January.

"Most of these insects are nuisance pests," Holloway says. "People just don't want them around. They probably don't actually cause any type of harm except irritation from flea bites. There have been a few cases reported in New Mexico this year of fleas carrying bubonic plague."

Students should be aware of ticks during the warmer months, he says.

"If people have animals, they can bring ticks indoors. They are usually fewer than fleas," he says.

Students also ignore termites, Holloway said. Students in most situations are living in rented structures, and they usually are not concerned with the structural quality.

People who are concerned with their health, he says, should watch for mosquitos, chiggers and fire ants. Students usually are not as concerned with mosquitos as they are south of us, he says.

"Everyone should also be aware of fire ants, especially when out on field trips or dark excursions," he says. "If you step on a mound, you can be covered in seconds. They are very painful but are rarely fatal."

And if students want to take further precautions, he might consider investing in an insect-eating pet. Holloway says he knew of a documented situation in which student had a cat that ate those pesky little critters.



photo by Dave Scott

## Exo hon

by Ann Ra Battalion

A variety of li species are rou the Texas A&M inary medicine however, the animals have to

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"When Mr. I nine months ag walk or eat and formed jaw," sai Russo, veterinary ate of small an "That's exactly shouldn't have e pets. People do the nutritional r these animals."

Because of Mr. vere condition