Q: *Something is eating the leaves on my Bougainvillea? What can I do?*

A: More than likely, the brown looper or inchworm is feeding on the foliage at night and then hiding in the thicker, unaffected foliage during the day. There’s also another leaf eating caterpillar, the leaf torter, which hides itself in rolled up leaves. The oleander caterpillar is another possibility.

Hand removal of the caterpillars is the least toxic management method, as well as waiting for predacious spiders to kill them. If the destruction is more severe, *Bacillus thuringiensis* is a bacterium that is applied to the foliage and kills the offending caterpillars when they eat the treated foliage.

Monitoring for pests is a key component of Integrated Pest Management, IPM. It’s important to know which plants in your landscape are susceptible to attacks by pests. Monthly monitoring is encouraged to discover infestations before they become severe. For more information on IPM, go to [http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/IPM/ipmis.shtml](http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/IPM/ipmis.shtml).

Keeping a journal of pest attacks will aid you in monitoring year to year. Write down which plant attracted a pest (identify the pest), the month of the year, any unusual environmental circumstances (i.e. drought, heavy rains, cold or mild winter, etc.), and the severity of the infestation. Note what management plan was used and its success.

If you have a plant that is repeatedly attacked by pests, you may want to reconsider having this plant in your landscape. Sometimes the plant’s location is conducive to enticing pests. To reduce the incidence of pests, make sure your plants are getting their recommended light and water requirements and always provide them with good air circulation. For more information on the Florida-friendly Yard principles, including “right plant, right place,” go to [http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine_principles.htm](http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine_principles.htm).

**PLANTING GUIDE**

**Vegetables & Herbs** (plant herbs from transplants and vegetables from seeds or transplants): Basil, bay laurel, ginger, lemon balm, marjoram, mint, oregano, rosemary, thyme, okra, and southern peas.

**Annuals:** Begonia Celosia, Coleus, Cosmos, Crossandra, Dahlberg daisy, Gomphrena, marigold, Melampodium, Nicotiana, periwinkle, Portulaca, Salvia, Torenia, and Zinnia.

**Perennials:** Beach buttercup, beach sunflower, blue daze, Coreopsis, daylily, Gaillardia, Gaura, Mexican heather, Pentas, Salvia, shrimp plant, society garlic, and Verbena.

**Blooming plants:** Allamanda, beautyberry, bird of paradise, blackberry lily, Canna, crape myrtle, Crinum lily, crossovine, dwarf Poinciana, fiddlewood, firespike, frangipani, gloriosa lily, golden dewdrop, horsemint, Jacquemontia, Loropetalum, Magnolia, Natal plum, rain lily, Vitex, and yellow Poinciana.
Fruits in season: Avocado, banana, citrus (calamondin, key lime, lemon and lime), fig, guava, kumquat, longan, lychee, macadamia, mango, papaya, passion vine, pineapple, pomegranate, sapodilla, and sea grape.

Upcoming educational classes:
Call 861-5000 or register on-line at http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/ for the following classes:
  - Rain Gardens, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. July 11
  - Market Gardening Course (8 classes), Twin Lakes Park, 6-8:00 p.m. July 11, 18, and 23; August 1, 8, and 21; September 5 and 12 (Cost: $40)
  - Contemplative Food Gardening: Ancient Traditions, Warm Mineral Springs Spa, 10:00 a.m. July 12
  - Worm Composting, Shamrock Park, 2:00 p.m. July 19
  - Rain Barrel Workshop, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. July 21
  - Growing Herbs in Florida, Twin Lakes Park, 10:00 a.m. July 25
  - Brown Bag Garden Series: Healthy Gardening Techniques, Garden of the Five Senses, North Port, Noon July 26
  - Irrigation 101, Twin Lakes Park, 1:00 p.m. August 8

GETTING HELP
The Master Gardener Help Desk at Twin Lakes Park is available to answer your questions. Call 861-9807 or email at mghelpdesk@scgov.net. Walk-ins are welcome Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., closed from noon to 1 p.m. Satellite Help Desks are available weekly at library locations throughout Sarasota County.
(Patricia Porchey is an Urban Horticulture Agent with University of Florida/IFAS Sarasota County Extension. Website: http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu)

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