

FROM THE CASE FILES: SKELETONIZERS

What Are Skeletonizers?

A Skeletonizer is a caterpillar or moth that devours the upper layer of leaves on various plants. They do not eat the veins, however, leaving just a skeleton of a leaf when they are done feeding.

Where Do They Come From?

The species currently being found across Arizona is an old world Skeletonizer. It's a new species to our region, and was first discovered in the United States in Southern California just a year ago. This species has now spread throughout Central and Southern Arizona. DLC's observation is that the Skeletonizers seem to be focused on Tecoma Species such as Orange Jubilee bushes.

How Do I Eradicate Them?

DLC's experts have been keeping an eye out and it appears the caterpillars have done their damage and are gone for the fall season. We are already seeing signs of promising new growth on affected plants. The Arizona Cooperative Extension recommends not treating the affected plant material and letting the frost kill off the remaining pests.

For incidental treatment, DLC recommends the use of Bacillus Thuringiensis (BT). BT concentrate can be found at your local home improvement store. Check the product's label for application instructions. You can also follow the Extension's advice and wait for the frost to help you out.



Species of Skeletonizer currently affecting Arizona plants



Orange Jubilee starting to show signs of Skeletonizer damage



Skeletonizers feed on plant material, leaving just the veins



Orange Jubilee bush showing severe damage by Skeletonizers

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