

Bark Lice Webbing on Oak

By Deborah Birge, Fort Bend Master Gardener

Q: I looked out at my lawn this morning and saw this shiny, gauzy white web all over my trees? How can I remove it? Is it harmful?

A: Well, you are the lucky winner of the [Bark lice](#) Lottery. We have two types of bark lice in this area, *Archipsocus nomas* and *Cerastipsocus venosus*. Both are small soft bodied insects, rarely seen. They are often referred to as tree cattle because they herd together as they feed around the tree trunk and limbs. They are rarely found on the foliage. Bark lice are a great clean-up crew feeding on fungi, bacteria, dead insects and lichens.

Although some think they are unsightly, they are highly beneficial and should be left alone. Eggs are laid under the protective web, the insect then goes through five to six instars. With the first fall frosts, the group will begin to decline, along with the web.



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