



*Ornamentals*

# Fall Webworm & Eastern Tent Caterpillar

Pest Fact Sheet **29**

## Introduction

The fall webworm (*Hyphantria cunea*, Drury) and the Eastern tent caterpillar (*Malacosoma americanum*, Fabricius) feed on fruit, shade, and woodland trees. They are of little economic importance in orchards which are regularly sprayed for the control of codling moth and other pests. Because they form unsightly webs, however, they can be considered a significant pest of nurseries and landscapes.

The fall webworm is frequently confused with the Gypsy moth. The dirty loosely-woven web of the fall webworm encloses branches; the larvae can be found feeding within the web. The web of the Eastern tent caterpillar, on the other hand, is thickly constructed in the forks and crotches of trees; the larvae do not feed within their webs, but congregate there at night and during rainy weather. Fall webworm occurs in the fall, whereas Eastern Tent Caterpillar occurs in the spring.

## Description

**Fall webworm:** The full-grown larvae are about 1 1/2" long. They may be yellow with dark stripes and spots, or they may be dull bluish black with no yellow. The body is very hairy and the head is dark. The adult moths have a wingspan of 1 1/2". Their color is nearly pure white.

**Eastern tent caterpillar:** The full-grown larvae are about 2" long and have sparse hairs. They are black with white and blue markings and have a white stripe down the middle of the back. The adult moths are reddish-brown in color with two whitish stripes running obliquely across each forewing.



*Fall  
Webworm*



*Eastern  
Tent  
Caterpillar*

## Life cycle

**Fall webworm:** There is one generation of the fall webworm per year. It overwinters as a pupa in the soil. In June and July, adult moths emerge from the soil and the females begin laying eggs in July. The eggs begin to hatch in late July-early August, and the larvae feed within the web for one month or more, crawl down the tree, construct a cocoon, and pupate.

**Eastern tent caterpillar:** There is one generation of the Eastern tent caterpillar per year. It overwinters in egg masses on twigs of trees. They hatch in the spring about the time the buds open. After feeding for two days, the larvae weave their tent. Successive layers are added to the tent as the larvae develop. Early in the summer, the larvae spin a cocoon, pupate, and emerge as adults. The females deposit masses of eggs in bands around twigs. The larvae develop inside the eggs, but do not hatch until the next spring.

### Control

Early detection of nests of either pest is important to avoid excessive defoliation. Destroy the nests by pruning or burning. Apply pesticides to hard-to-reach infestations or when populations are heavy. Consult your county Extension Educator (see county office telephone listing below) for specific pesticide recommendations.

### Summary

	<u>Fall Webworm</u>	<u>Eastern Tent Caterpillar</u>
Damaging stage	Larvae	Larvae
Part of plant attacked	Leaves	Leaves
Overwintering stage	Pupa	Eggs
Number of generations per year	One	One
Time of year when damage is done	Fall	Spring
Number of applications per year	As needed	As needed

### UNH Cooperative Extension County Office Telephone Numbers

<b>Belknap</b> (603) 527-5475	<b>Carroll</b> (603) 539-3331	<b>Cheshire</b> (603) 352-4550	<b>Coos</b> (603) 788-4961	<b>Grafton</b> (603) 787-6944
<b>Hillsborough</b> Goffstown (603) 641-6060	<b>Merrimack</b> (603) 796-2151	<b>Rockingham</b> Brentwood, NH 03833 (603) 679-5616	<b>Strafford</b> (603) 749-4445	<b>Sullivan</b> (603) 863-9200

**Stop!** It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. If unsure of registration status of a particular pesticide product, contact the NH Division of Pesticide Control at (603) 271-3550. Store pesticides in their original containers in a locked cabinet or shed away from food. Dispose of unused pesticides or empty containers safely, according to NH regulations. If you suspect pesticide poisoning, call the New Hampshire Poison Control Center at 1-800-562-8236.

  
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