

EASTERN TENT CATERPILLAR

Scientific name: *Malacosoma americanum*

Time seen: April and May

Appearance: The body is black and has a white stripe down its back. Yellow and brown lines are on the sides. There are a row of oval blue spots on each side of the body. The head is black and the long, thin hairs on the body are yellow-orange.

Feeds on: Cherries, plums, peaches, hawthorns, apples and crabapples, later wandering to other trees and shrubs. They feed as a group or colony.

Web: Newly hatched larvae build a white, silky tent that webs wood-to-wood. The web is located where two branches come together in the crotch of the tree. Young are inside the tent when not feeding.

Control: Push a stick into the web and pull the web and larvae out of the tree. Drop them into a bucket of soapy water to “marinate” for the day. Spraying is ineffective when they are inside the web because the web repels the droplets. Often, they do not do a great deal of damage. This is a native insect with many predators.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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