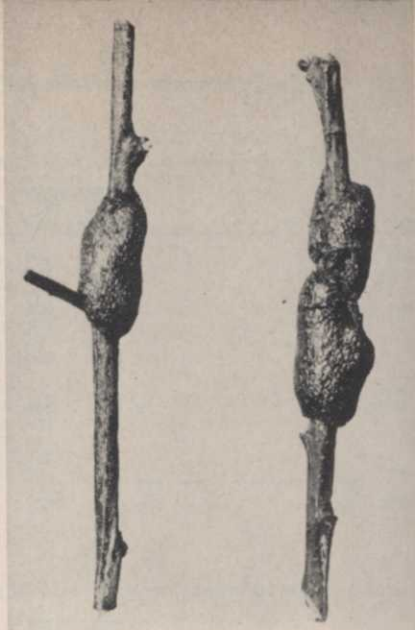




Tent of the eastern tent caterpillar is stretched from branch to branch within the fork of a wild cherry tree. Seven hundred or more gregarious larvae may retreat into a single nest.



Bandlike collars around branches and twigs of host plants are formed by egg masses of the eastern tent caterpillar. Each mass is laid by the female moth as a flowing packet of from 150 to 350 eggs, and later the egg mass becomes solid.

Meet Those Webbing Defoliators of Trees and Flowering Plants

Eastern Tent Caterpillars

EASTERN tent caterpillars, *Malacosoma americanum* (Fabricius), have plagued U. S. greenery since 1646 and periodically, every 10 years or so, become so abundant that they completely defoliate unsprayed orchard and shade trees and other flowering plants. Leaves of wild cherry and apple trees are most favored, but other plants such as roses, pear, plum, peach, and shade trees are ravaged particularly when the favored food supply is exhausted.

Damage by these gregarious beasts weakens trees, and repeated defoliation along with other stresses ultimately kills the plant host.

Twig Collars Hold Moth's Eggs

This insect passes the winter in egg masses that form bandlike collars around the twigs or branches of the host. Egg masses are about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long and contain from 150 to 350 eggs. In the spring when small, tender leaves begin to unfold, larvae hatch from the eggs and crawl to a nearby tree crotch. There, a larval colony is formed and is

often composed of the young from several egg masses.

Soon larvae construct a tent of silk enlarging it as they grow. The tent is used for a retreat at night and during rainy or cool weather. From their nest, the larvae sally forth on the tender, spring foliage and feed at regular intervals trailing threads of silk along their path. Branches between the tent and feeding sites frequently are incased by silken strands left along trails of the busy caterpillars.

The fuzzy larvae are fully grown in about six weeks and quit the community habit. At this time they are about 2 inches long with a white stripe down the back bordered by reddish-brown patches and blue spots on the sides. Larvae scatter from the tree nest and spin white cocoons in which they transform to brown pupae. Cocoons are about 1 inch long and are usually found on the tree trunk or some nearby object.

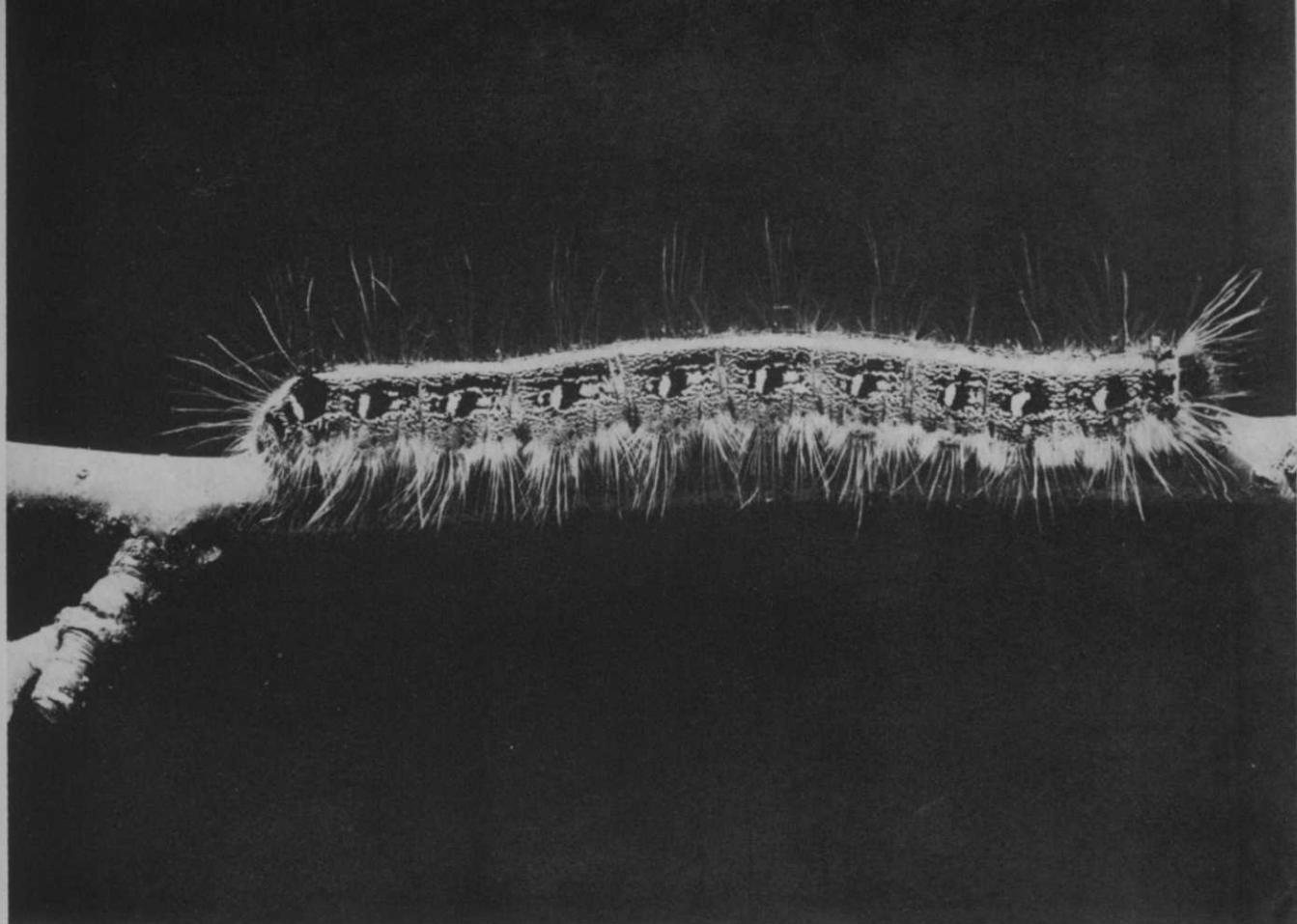
Ten days to three weeks after pupation, adult moths emerge from cocoons. Adults are light, reddish brown with two white stripes across each forewing. In

early summer, females lay eggs on twigs and branches for the next season's generation which remains in the egg stage for about nine months.

Kill Winter Eggs Or Summer Larvae

Eastern tent caterpillars often are abundant each year in one or more localities which frequently cover considerable territory. Several methods of control are recommended. Egg clusters are easily seen and can be pruned out and burned in the winter. In early summer, nests are removed from trees and burned by winding them up on the brushy tip of a pole and putting them into a fire.

Chemicals are applied in the spring as soon as nests are large enough to be seen. Wettable powder DDT, methoxychlor, chlordane, carbaryl (Sevin) or malathion at 1 lb., or toxaphene at 1.2 lbs. per 100 gals. of spray or 3 lbs. of lead arsenate with 3 lbs. of hydrated lime to 100 gals. of spray will give satisfactory control. If infestations are heavy, wild cherry should not be allowed to grow within a quarter-mile of protected plants.



Spotted markings on the side of the larva and a white stripe on its back identify the eastern tent caterpillar.

Tree entirely stripped of foliage supports only the silken tent of eastern tent caterpillars since they have moved on to ravage the leaves of another tree nearby.



Threads of spun silk stretched along trunk of wild cherry tree show paths of tent caterpillars from community tent nest to feeding sites in upper branches.

