

# Tree Pests & Disease

## Tent Caterpillars

### What is a forest tent caterpillar?



A tent caterpillar is typically 5cm in length and is a native insect found throughout hardwood forests in North America. The body is dark coloured with white spots down their

back that's covered with hairs.

In June the larvae will spin a cocoon to emerge later as a yellow or tan moth with thick, furry body. These caterpillars multiply rapidly and can defoliate a large number of trees and shrubs in a short time.



### How to recognize a caterpillar outbreak

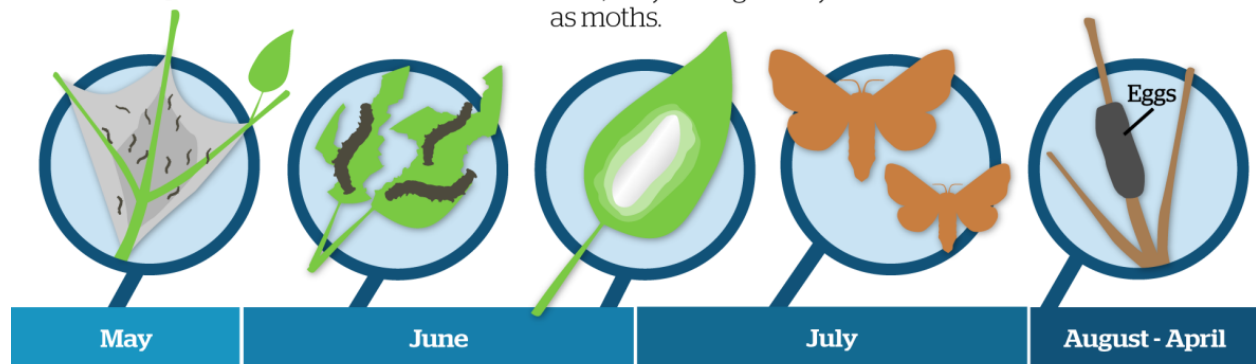
## Caterpillar Outbreak: How it happens

**May:** Eggs hatch, build communal "tents", mature for 4-6 weeks, emerge as caterpillars.

**June:** Caterpillars feed on tree leaves, often defoliating entire tree.

**June-July:** Caterpillars cocoon themselves on tree branches. 10 days later, they emerge as moths.

**July:** Moths mate within 24 hours, laying up to 350 eggs for next year's hatch.



A tent caterpillar outbreak is hard to oversee. They hatch near time when tree buds break. Usually large amounts of clusters are found together feeding on trees, including ash, poplar and chokecherry. In

some cases these caterpillars can completely defoliate a tree, however, the trees typically recover.

### How to control forest tent caterpillars?

You can place 'sticky' tapes or other types of barriers on the tree to prevent the caterpillar to reach the foliage. You can also remove egg masses before they hatch and remove larvae when congregated.



forest tent caterpillar eggs



Tent caterpillar egg

Caterpillars that have already reached the foliage and are feasting away can be removed with a blast of water.