



Fall webworm

Hyphantria cunea

Order Lepidoptera, Family Arctiidae;
tiger and footmen moths
Native pest

Host plants: Birch, cherry, elm and willow are preferred, but over 100 species of hardwood trees and shrubs are also hosts.

Description: Adult moths have a wingspan of 30–40 mm, are 18 mm long with wings folded and pure white wings or white wings with black spots. Mature larvae are approximately 25 mm long. There are many orange-yellow or black tubercles on their bodies which support tufts of long, gray, silky hairs. Larvae are a pale yellowish color or brown with black spots. Larvae can have red, black, or red-black, head capsules.

Life history: Adults emerge from late June to mid July and mate. Eggs are laid on the underside of leaves. These eggs hatch after about two weeks and young larvae construct a nest by webbing leaves together. Larvae feed on foliage enclosed by the nest, which expands as the larvae develop. Mature larvae leave the nest to pupate. There is one generation a year in the north and up to four generations farther south.

Overwintering: Pupae in cocoons in sheltered places.

Damage symptoms: The fall webworm is a pest primarily because of the unsightly nature of the web nests constructed on terminals. There may be some branch deformity caused by webs, but tree growth is rarely affected.

Monitoring: Eggs hatch when Greenspire littleleaf linden and Northern catalpa bloom in mid to late June (Herms). Look for larvae from late July to late August. Look for the beginnings of webs on terminals.

Physical control: Prune webbing as it appears.

Chemical control: *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* is effective against young larvae. Horticultural oil or insecticidal soap sprays may control young larvae while preserving the large number of natural enemies that usually limit the development of this insect. Control is not effective once larvae are enclosed in their web.

Biological control: More than 50 species of parasitoids and 36 species of predators are reported. *Apanteles hyphantriae* and *Meterorus hyphantriae* are important caterpillar parasitoids. *Hyposoter* spp. (Ichneumonidae) are also parasitoids of larvae.

Plant mortality risk: Low

Biorational pesticides: *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, diflubenzuron, insecticidal soap, pyrethrins, spinosad, tenbufenozide

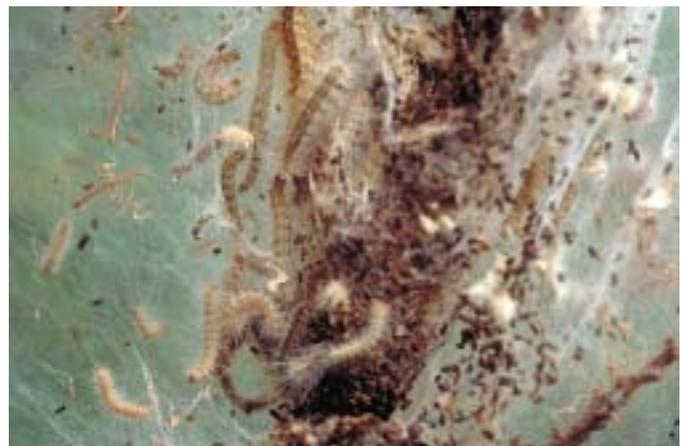
Conventional pesticides: acephate, bifenthrin, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos (nursery only), cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, fluvalinate, lambda-cyhalothrin, malathion, permethrin



Unsightly webs caused by fall webworm on roadside black walnut in August. (114)
Photo: Cliff Sadof



Close-up of fall webworm nest; leaves are webbed together with silk. (114)
Photo: John Davidson



Close-up of fall webworm larvae in tents. (W62)
Photo: Whitney Cranshaw



Fall webworm (continued)



Fall webworm larvae in tents. (W61)
Photo: Whitney Cranshaw



Fall webworm, newly hatched larvae. (W64)
Photo: Whitney Cranshaw



Fall webworm adult. (W63)
Photo: Whitney Cranshaw



Fall webworm larvae showing red and black head capsules. Top larva has a brown body, bottom larva has a yellow body. (116)
Photo: John Davidson



Fall webworm adult. (115)
Photo: John Davidson



Fall webworm larva. (117)
Photo: John Davidson