

They're Baaaaack!

Eastern Tent Caterpillars Make Their Return



They're creepy, crawly and they're coming to a tree near you. The Eastern tent caterpillar will be popping up in web-like tents across West Virginia in the coming days. They start appearing in late March and stick around for 6-8 weeks.

West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) Plant/Pest Biologist Dr. Berry Crutchfield stresses if you see them, don't panic. "While they're an eyesore, they don't do that much harm. Feeding damage can be unsightly, but it rarely results in tree death."

Eastern tent caterpillars love to munch on the leaves of wild black cherry, crabapple, hawthorn and most fruit trees. Dr. Crutchfield has some suggestions on how to control them.

- *Remove wild black cherry trees from your property because they're a highly attractive host
- *Treat foliage of problem trees at bud-break with an insecticide labeled for caterpillar control
- *Treat nests (when golf ball size) and surrounding foliage with an insecticide labeled for caterpillar control
- *Repeatedly destroy tents with a long stick

Don't confuse the Eastern tent caterpillar with gypsy moths. Gypsy moths do not make tents and they won't appear until later in the season.

If you have questions, contact Dr. Berry Crutchfield at 304-558-2212 or bcrutchfield@wvda.us.