

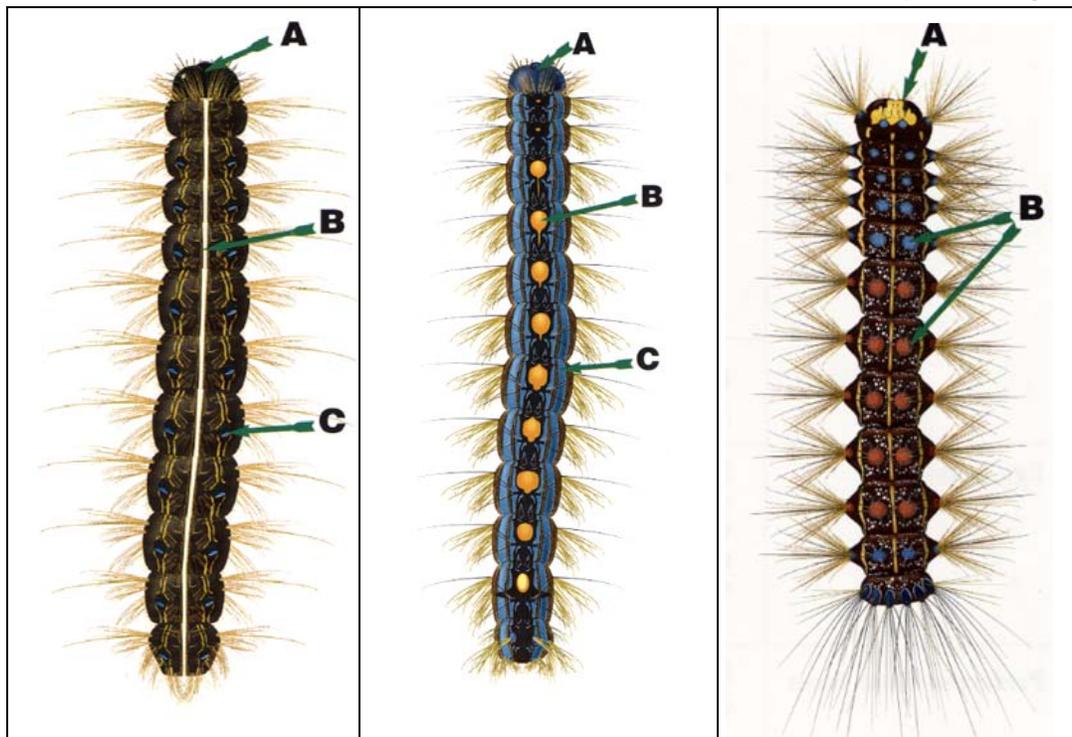
# Comparison of the Eastern Tent Caterpillar, Forest Tent Caterpillar and Gypsy Moth

Michigan State University Extension

**T**hese three insects are often found feeding on the leaves of hardwood trees early in the summer. They can be easily confused with one another. The illustrations and information here will help you to identify which

caterpillar is feeding on your trees. Contact your local MSU Extension office or regional Dept. of Natural Resources office for more information on the biology and management of these insects.

*Illustrations by Peter Carrington*



**Eastern Tent Caterpillar**  
(*Malacosoma americanum*)

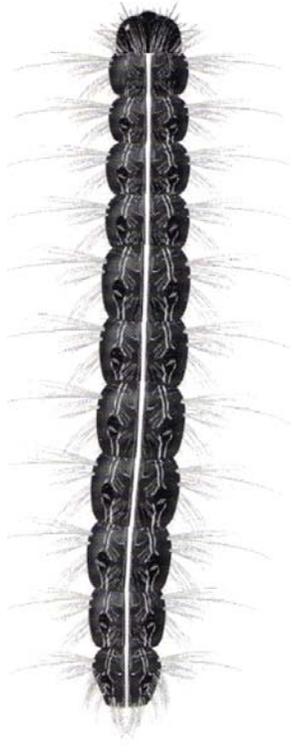
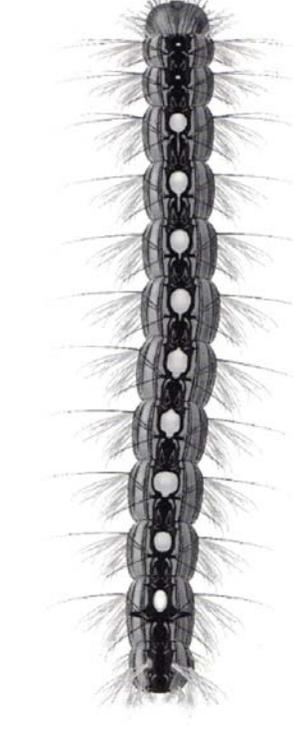
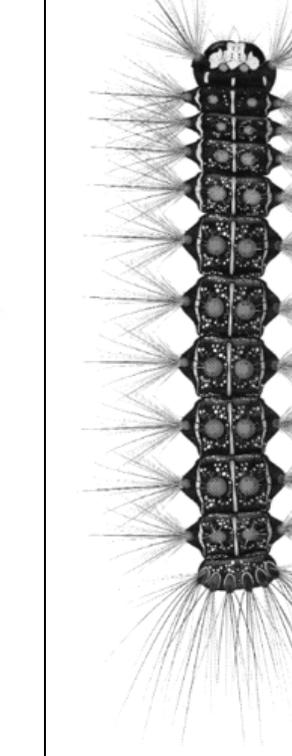
**Forest Tent Caterpillar**  
(*Malacosoma disstria*)

**Gypsy Moth Caterpillar**  
(*Lymantria dispar*)

<b>Markings</b>	A) Dark head; B) prominent white or yellow stripe down the center of the body; C) small blue spots to the side.	A) Blue head; B) prominent central row of white or yellow markings in keyhole or footprint shape; C) bluish on sides of body.	A) Yellow head with black markings; B) prominent blue and red spots.
<b>Tents</b>	Prominent silk tent in branch junction.	They do not spin silk tents; resting sites on leaves may have small silk layer.	No silk tents.



## Comparison of the Eastern Tent Caterpillar, Forest Tent Caterpillar and Gypsy Moth

	 <p><b>Eastern Tent Caterpillar</b> (<i>Malacosoma americanum</i>)</p>	 <p><b>Forest Tent Caterpillar</b> (<i>Malacosoma disstria</i>)</p>	 <p><b>Gypsy Moth Caterpillar</b> (<i>Lymantria dispar</i>)</p>
<b>Egg Mass</b>	Dark, spindle-shaped mass wrapped around twigs; rough varnished texture. 	Similar to eastern tent caterpillar. 	Tan color; covered with fine hairs; 1 to 3 inches long; usually on tree bark. 
<b>Preferred Host Trees</b>	Black cherry, apple, crabapple.	Aspen, sugar maple, oaks, birch, black gum.	Oaks, aspen, birch, willow and more than 250 other species.
<b>Populations</b>	Native insect; silk tent is unattractive, but feeding rarely harms trees; common pest of ornamental trees in urban settings.	Native insect; outbreaks occur at roughly 10-year intervals and usually last 2 to 4 years; most common in forests, especially where aspen is abundant.	Exotic pest; severe defoliation during outbreaks can occur for 2 to 3 years in urban and forested areas, especially where oaks are abundant.