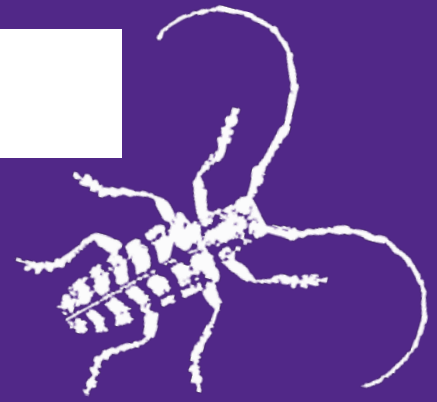


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Fall Webworm

The fall webworm, *Hyphantria cunea*, second generation is now present throughout most of Kansas with nests present on trees, such as, hickory and walnut. Fall webworm nests consists of silk webbing that encloses the ends of branches and leaves (Figures 1 and 2). Fall webworm larvae or caterpillars are pale-green, yellow to nearly white, with two black spots on each abdominal segment. Caterpillars are covered with long, white hairs (Figure 3). Fall webworm caterpillars feed on a wide-range of trees, including: birch, cherry, crabapple, elm, maples, hickory, pecan, mulberry, walnut, and willow. Fall webworm caterpillars, unlike caterpillars associated with the eastern tent caterpillar, *Malacosoma americanum*, remain within the enclosed nests and do not venture out to feed. Caterpillars consume leaves, resulting in branches with only webbing attached that contains fecal deposits (frass) or ‘caterpillar poop’. The nests will eventually dry-up as the caterpillars transition into pupae, with adults eventually eclosing (emerging) from the pupae later on in the growing season.



Figure 1. Fall webworm nest on walnut tree (Raymond Cloyd, KSU)



Figure 2. Fall webworm nest on birch tree (Raymond Cloyd, KSU)

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At this time of year, feeding by fall webworm caterpillars is not directly harmful to trees, especially larger trees. The most effective method of managing fall webworm infestations is to prune-out the nests that enclose the caterpillars, place into a plastic bag, and dispose of immediately. Insecticide spray applications are not be effective in managing fall webworm infestations because the caterpillars remain in the nests while feeding, which reduces exposure to spray residues. If insecticides need to be applied, for whatever reason, use high-volume spray applications that penetrate the protective nests, or use a rake to disrupt or open-up the nests so that insecticide sprays contact the caterpillars.



Figure 3. Close-up of fall webworm larvae (Raymond Cloyd, KSU)

Raymond Cloyd – Horticultural Entomology

HOME

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[Need an insect identified? Visit the Insect Diagnostics Program Website](#)

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