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Common Apple Pests

Apple Maggot *Rhagoletis pomonella*



Adult



Damage

Description: Adults are ¼" flies with yellow legs and transparent wings patterned with dark, crosswise bands. Larvae are white ¼" maggots.

Damage: Maggots tunnel through apples, blueberries, and plums. Fruit drops prematurely; early cultivars are most affected.

Control: Collect and destroy dropped fruit daily until September, twice a month in fall; hang apple maggot traps in trees from mid-June until harvest (1 per dwarf tree, 6 per full-size tree); plant clover groundcover to attract beetles that prey on pupae; grow late-maturing cultivars.

Codling Moth *Cydia pomonella*



Larva



Adult



External damage



Internal damage

Description: Adults are gray-brown moths; forewings with fine, white lines and brown tips, hindwings brown with pale fringes (¾" wingspan). Larvae are pink or creamy white, 7/8" caterpillars with brown heads. Eggs, flattened white.

Damage: Larvae tunnel through apple, apricot, cherry, peach, pear and plum fruit to center, ruining them.

Control: In early spring, scrape loose bark to remove overwintering cocoons and spray dormant oil; grow cover crops to attract native predators, especially ground beetles that eat pupae; place 2 pheromone traps per tree as buds just begin to open in order to collect moths before they lay eggs on fruit.

Tent Caterpillars *Malacosoma* spp.



Eastern tent caterpillar egg mass



Eastern tent caterpillar



Eastern tent caterpillar



Tent



Eastern tent caterpillar and tent

Description: Adults are yellowish tan to brown moths with 2 narrow, diagonal stripes across wings (1-1½" wingspan). Larvae are black, hairy 2-2½" caterpillars with a white stripe or rows of dots along the back and irregular, brownish blue or red marks along sides; most spin large "tents" of silk webbing in branch crotches of trees. Eggs are laid on twigs in masses, covered with hardened foamy layer. Eggs resemble a dark, shiny belt encircling a twig.

Damage: Larvae feed on leaves of most deciduous trees and shrubs, especially apples, aspens, and wild cherries. Trees may be fully defoliated in years of high caterpillar populations. Trees usually leaf out again later in the summer but growth may be stunted for several years.

Control: Prune infected branches and burn them, or remove tents filled with caterpillars from branches by winding them onto a broomstick with nails projecting from it; in winter, remove egg masses from bare branches; attract native parasitic flies and wasps by growing small-flowered herbs, such as catnip, and wildflowers, such as Queen Anne's Lace. Do not destroy wandering caterpillars with white eggs or cocoons attached to their backs; they are hosts for native parasites.

For more info, see **The Organic Gardener's Handbook of Natural Insect and Disease Control**