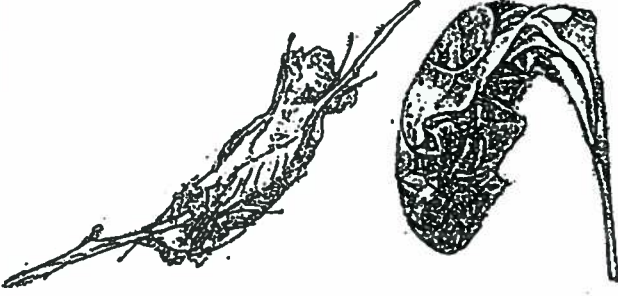




IDENTIFYING BROWNTAIL MOTH WINTER NESTS

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The **browntail moth** overwinters as colonies of caterpillars in white silk tightly woven around a leaf in trees or shrubs. These webs contain 25 to 400 larvae, are spun in the early fall, and remain firmly attached to the tips of small branches all winter. The webs are often confused with silken structures formed by other less serious species of moths. Web counts can be used to plan control projects. Clipping and destroying overwintering webs by either soaking in water and detergent or burning in an incinerator can provide control of isolated populations found in low trees and shrubs.



Browntail moth winter webs look like:

- 2-5 in. (5-10 cm) long
- white silk tightly woven around a leaf or leaves
- wrap of white silk tying leaf petiole to twig
- small, brown, hairy larvae inside dense silk web
- on branch tips of oak, apple, shadbush, cherry, beach plum, and rugose rose

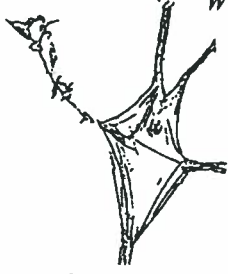
Among the webs most often mistaken for browntail moth webs are old **fall webworm nests***. The nests are formed in late summer, engulf the foliage and can be 2 to 3 feet long. By mid-fall the larvae have left the nests. During winter, the nests become detached and hang loosely from branches.



What old fall webworm nests look like in winter:


- variable length, 3-10 in. (7-20 cm)
- loosely tied mat of white silk and debris
- not associated with a leaf - any leaves caught in web do not have petioles tied to twig
- larvae **not** present in silk mat in late fall/winter/spring
- on wide variety of deciduous hosts, especially on ash and oak
- usually hanging from twigs or branches
- some webs fall on ground in late winter

Remnants of old tents of the **eastern tent caterpillar*** can also be mistaken for browntail moth webs. These tents are built in the branch crotches of wild cherry and apple trees in late April and May and may be a foot or more long when fully formed. The tents also resemble the spring and summer webs of the browntail moth. Eastern tent caterpillars, which are present in their webs from late April to June, are covered with brown hairs have a solid whitish line down the middle of the back with a row of oval pale blue spots on each side. Browntail moth larvae are also covered with dark brown hairs, but have a broken white stripe down each side of the body and conspicuous, unpaired, reddish spots on the posterior end of the back.



Spring tent

What eastern tent caterpillar tents look like:



Old tent in fall/winter

*A detailed information and control sheet available on this pest from Maine Forest Service, Forest Health and Monitoring Division