



Forest tent caterpillarsThe forest tent caterpillar (FTC), *Malacosoma disstria*, is a native defoliator of a wide variety of hardwood trees and shrubs. It is often mistakenly called the armyworm. Its range in North America extends from coast to coast and from the tree line in Canada to the southern states. These caterpillars feed primarily on aspen and birch trees in northern Minnesota and on basswood and oaks in central and southern Minnesota. The only hardwood not regularly fed on is red maple. When populations are high, FTC will even eat tamarack foliage during outbreaks.***

Army worms will eat everything in an area and once the food supply is exhausted the entire "army" will move to the next available food source. The armyworm's diet consists mainly of grasses and small grain crops. An infestation is hard to detect as the caterpillars migrate to new feeding areas in the cool of the night. When the caterpillars near maturity, they can lay waste to an entire crop in a few days.**

North-wide outbreaks of FTC occur at intervals of five to ten years and are five to eight years in duration. In the last 120 years, outbreaks peaked in 1891, 1898, 1912, 1922, 1937, 1952, 1967, 1978, 1990 and 2001. See maps of peak years defoliation below. In any given location, defoliation is usually noticed for two to four consecutive years.

<http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-nQFyu9fwdyg/TdFgqFj1XdI/AAAAAAAAAVA/EtWvjH-k7Fw/s1600/invasion.jpg>

**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Army_worm Jan 26, 2012 7:00 PM

<http://i.pbbase.com/o4/48/95248/1/60081741.ForestTentCaterpillar.jpg>

***http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest_health/ftc/index.html Jan 26, 2012 6:50 PM