

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 09-06-06) More critters, tomatoes and permaculture © 2006

While you're out walking or driving this week you might notice some tent caterpillar nests. Don't panic! They are actually the webs of fall webworm (*Hyphantria cunea*). These caterpillars turn into a lovely white moth. Fall webworms only munch on deciduous trees under cover of their webs, so look for them on fruit trees especially and other ornamental trees.

Fall webworm caterpillars feed mostly on the ends of branches. The female moths lay clusters of eggs on the undersides of leaves in June and July and larvae are now hatching out and becoming eating machines, never leaving their webs. They usually don't do very much damage, unlike our spring and early summer western caterpillar onslaughts of a few years back.

The method for controlling fall webworm is to cut off the tips of the branches with the webs. Step on or smash the webs (with the caterpillars inside) and then place them in your trashcan. If you have a bad infestation (which is usually rare), use Bt *Bacillus thuringiensis* sprayed into the webs to kill larvae.

We've received a few calls at the Extension Office about bagworms. These strange creatures are found on the sides of houses and garages in our area this time of year. Bagworms can sometimes become a problem on ornamental plants and fruit trees. So far in Kitsap County they are only a problem on the sides of houses and garage doors. Bt again is the way to control this pest, but the pesticide label must list "bagworms" as the target pest or it won't work. Most people are able to vacuum up or pressure wash bagworms off their homes. Luckily for us, they're only found outside rather than inside.

The female wingless bagworm moths cover themselves in dust and then lay their eggs inside the case. They're relatively small and look like black dots hanging off garage doors and sidings. Bagworms never become flying moths, although are technically called moths. Female bag worms do not need a male bagworm to procreate. To receive a copy of Extension Bulletin EB 0827 with information and photos of bagworms call the Extension Office at 360-337-7157 or send a self-addressed stamped envelope with the words "bagworm" written on the back of the envelope to WSU Extension Kitsap, 345 6<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 550, Bremerton WA 98337-1874.

Another unusual occurrence this week was the case of the "purple-spotted tomato leaves and dark purple-green hued tomato fruit." One of my very veteran and very experienced Master Gardeners brought in a tomato stem with somewhat curling purple-spotted leaves, purple streaks on the stem and a tomato with very dark purple stripes on the stem end. We ruled out all the possible diseases and fungi. It had us stumped for a short while until we found the description for tomato spotted wilt virus. When we looked even more closely at the tomato we could see whorls of circular pigment on the skin. Since the tomato was still green the swirl like circles weren't as closely defined as full-blown tomato spot virus, but when the fruit ripens they'll become distinct. One host plant for

this virus is impatiens, which did grow near the tomato we were examining. Sure enough when all these symptoms were put together we discovered we did indeed have a case of tomato spotted wilt virus. Visit

[www.oznet.ksu.edu/dp\\_hfrr/extensn/problems/tomswv.htm](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/dp_hfrr/extensn/problems/tomswv.htm) to see photos and more information.

Mark your calendars now to attend a permaculture class September 14 from 7-9:30 p.m. at Stillwaters in Kingston. Next week's column we'll talk about permaculture.