

# Using Integrated Pest Management in the Fight Against Tent Caterpillars

A Model for Pest Management Information

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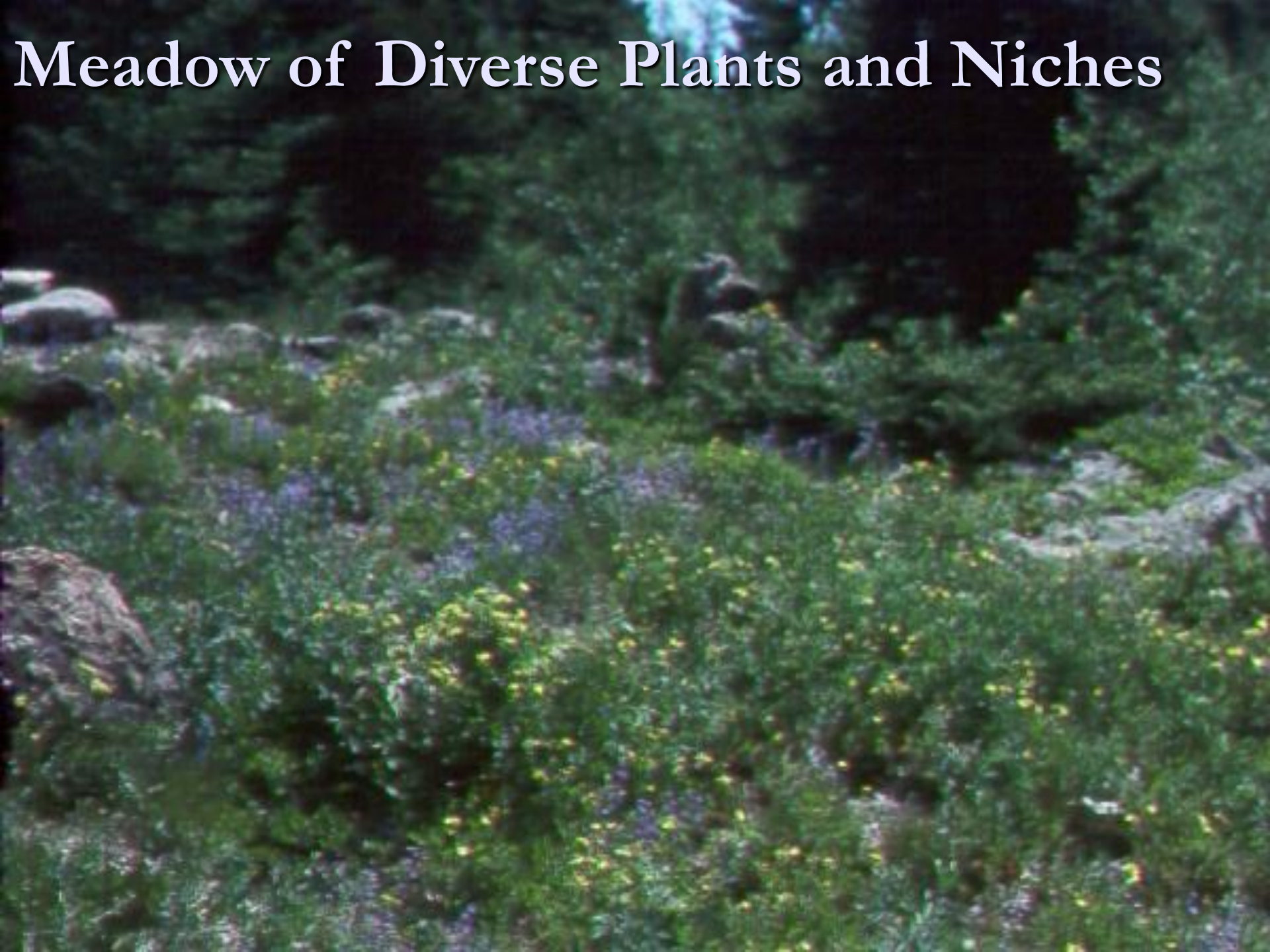
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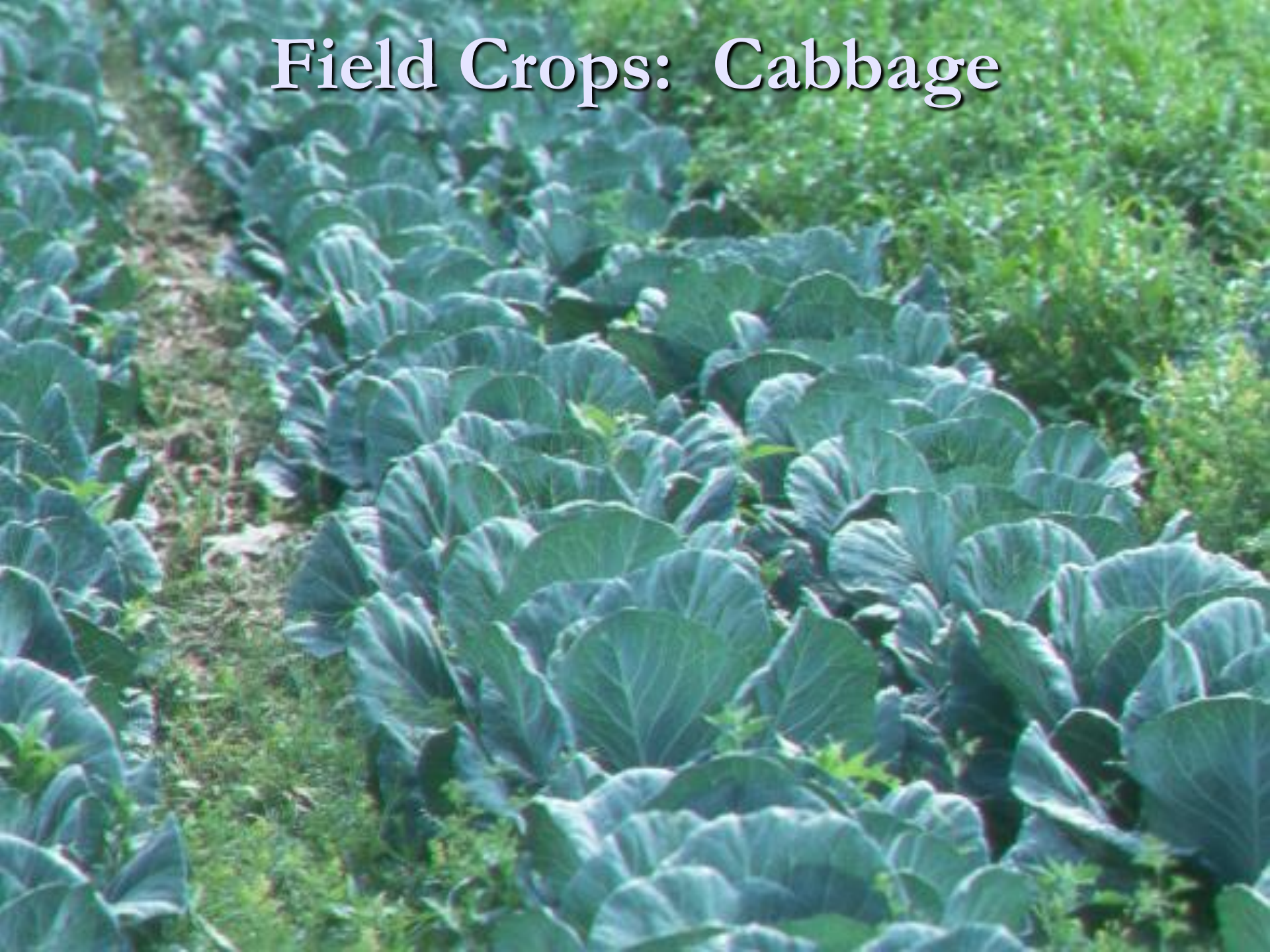
Green Gardening Workshop

October 21, 2015

# Meadow of Diverse Plants and Niches



# Field Crops: Cabbage



# Urban Development



Native  
Soils

Not  
Native  
Soil



# Chrysalis: A Garden for Bugs

# Tent Caterpillars





# Tent Caterpillars

Western Tent Caterpillar:  
*Malacosoma pluviale californicum*

Forest tent caterpillar:  
*Malacosoma disstria*

Lepidoptera: Lasiocampidae

Washington State University Extension

EB1718

Several caterpillars make silken 'tents' in landscape trees, shrubs and fruit trees. The tents provide the larvae with protection from weather and natural enemies. Unfortunately, these tents are not aesthetically pleasing to most homeowners, especially when they are abundant. The most common tent-maker is the western tent caterpillar (*Malacosoma californicum pluviale* Dyar) followed by the forest tent caterpillar (*Malacosoma disstria* Hübner). Generally, the two tent caterpillar life cycles are similar with some variation in preferred host plants. Both species have periodic population outbreaks during which the world seems overrun with caterpillars and unsightly tree defoliation may occur. Often, these outbreaks collapse on their own as trees mobilize their defense systems and natural enemies (parasites and predators) seek out and destroy the caterpillars.

This publication seeks to provide residents with seasonal scouting tips and management options for managing tent caterpillars in the home landscape. The options change with the time of year and life stage (egg, larvae, etc.) of the insect. A few caterpillars will not cause significant damage, but many tents may result in defoliation of the tree. Healthy trees will survive and grow new leaves by midsummer and may be less susceptible to attack in future years.

<http://ext100.wsu.edu/snohomish/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/Tent-CaterpillarsDRAFT041113.pdf>



Photo by Mike Johnson, used with permission.

### **Early spring, when apples bloom or leaves are nearly fully formed**

- The egg mass hatches and small, black caterpillars spin webbing to make a tiny protective tent; they then feed together in groups nearby.
- Looks for the glint of white in the trees.

#### *Management Options*

- *Prune and remove these tents and caterpillars, or pinch caterpillars on tents.*
- *Biological sprays are most effective when caterpillars are small and actively feeding.*
- *The caterpillars must eat the bacteria. It is best to apply microbial insecticides after bad weather, when the caterpillars have been confined to the tent and are hungry.*
- *Rain may wash off the product by the time the caterpillars can leave the tent to feed.*



### **Later in the spring**

- As caterpillars grow, they leave the nest to feed on new leaves and return to the nest in cool or wet weather.

#### *Management Options*

- *Remove tents and caterpillars by pruning or pulling off the silk and caterpillars; this also removes the unsightly webs.*
- *DO NOT burn or torch the tents as this has caused house fires, brush fires, and serious burns*

<http://ext100.wsu.edu/snohomish/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/Tent-CaterpillarsDRAFT041113.pdf>



# Remove Egg Mass: Prune or Pick





**Look for tents when apples first bloom**

# Knowing when to spray or not spray





**Remove tent  
caterpillars  
with webbing**

**Repeat  
bagging and  
dance**



**Tent Caterpillar**

**Must move before  
pupating**

**Seeks shelter for  
cocoons**

**Not feeding**



**Recognizing  
when biocontrol  
is present.**

**Egg of a  
parasitoid fly**



Parasitic fly pupae and frass

# Knowing the value of a pest





# Alder



# Frass – mini-alfalfa pellets



# New beginning

1987



1989



Happy  
Ending

# AND NOW

- Go to one of eight tables (5 people /table)
- Note the number – 1,2,3,4
- Follow the directions and use the resources given to you (usually a publication with info for making quick decisions)
- You can work as a team but
- Jot down your answers for yourself
- Move to a numbered table you've not visited yet.