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Caterpillars of Eastern Forests. David L. Wagner, Valerie Giles, Richard C. Reardon and Michael L. McManus. 1997. USDA Forest Service FHTET-96-34, 113 pp., soft cover.

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BOOK REVIEW

CATERPILLARS OF EASTERN FORESTS. David L. Wagner, Valerie Giles, Richard C. Reardon and Michael L. McManus. 1997. USDA Forest Service FHTET-96-34, 113 pp., soft cover.

Over the years, I have lamented the lack of a popular guide to Lepidoptera larvae. Aside from the classic *Golden Guide to Butterflies and Moths* (R.T. Mitchell and H. S. Zim, 1987. Golden Press, NY, 160 pp.), field guides have given scant attention to the larvae, illustrating only a few examples of common species. *Caterpillars of Eastern Forests* is a welcome addition to the literature, and provides a long-overdue popular guide. When I received this new publication, I found myself flipping through every page and being thoroughly impressed with the quality photographs and informative text.

David Wagner and his co-authors have put together a useful, full-color guide to the common caterpillars in the forests on the eastern U.S. and Canada. *Caterpillars of Eastern Forests* is the kind of reference that I wish I had for all those "what is it?" questions from the public that I have received over the years. Although the publication does not have a taxonomic key, it is nonetheless a very good pictorial guide to arboreal larvae. All of the color photographs in this publication are of excellent quality, and the text accompanying the photographs will be very helpful to anyone trying to identify a caterpillar or find a food plant for one he/she has found. Of course, a book of this size contains mostly macrolepidopterans, and those that are more likely to be encountered are shown, as well as some rarely-encountered but interesting species, such as the slug caterpillars.

This publication should be on the shelf of every naturalist, extension office and park office. It not only shows off over 200 species of Lepidoptera larvae, but the sections on collecting and rearing are useful introductions that will be helpful to beginners and the less-experienced with rearing.

The only criticism of this publication that I have is the lack of a durable cover. If this book had been produced in a format similar to the usual field guides, and a durable cover added, then it would be an immediate seller at most bookstores. In this day of expensive books and journals, it is refreshing to see a publication of this quality and appeal offered to the public at no charge. The current format of 8.5 × 11 inches with a fairly soft cover and glossy paper will be fine for indoor use, but won't last too long outside. However, the free distribution of this by the USDA Forest Service's Forest Health Technology Transfer program is to be commended. The publication is available from the USDA Forest Service, Attn: Richard C. Reardon, 180 Canfield Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505.

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