



Moth Magnets

You can be a moth magnet and attract moths! Most moths are nocturnal or active during the night time, and most humans are diurnal or active during the daytime, so we don't encounter each other too often. It takes a little effort to find them, but it is worth it!

Use one of the following techniques to attract moths. Make sure you do this on the weekend and have an adult with you because you might be up late! Observe the moths carefully and write down what you see. Make sure you write down things like where you were, the time you made your observations, how many you attracted, their colors and patterns, what they were doing, etc. And make sure to follow the...

Insect Spotter's Code of Conduct

- * Always leave the environment exactly as you found it. Put back logs and stones if you have been looking under them.
- * If you are taking insects away, always make a note of what they are feeding on. Be sure you have enough of that food for your insect.
- * Always return the insects to the place where you found them.

Porch lights: Many moths are attracted to the light from incandescent bulbs. Turn on your porch light at dusk and periodically step outside to see what is there. Look around the light on the walls, ceiling, and on nearby screens or bushes.

Black lights: This is a serious technique used by insect collectors, but can easily be modified for home use. Bring a black light outside at dusk and turn it on. Again, look around the light on walls, the ceiling, screens, bushes, and other nearby objects. Compare the numbers and diversity of moths attracted to the black light with those attracted to the regular (incandescent) light.

Sugaring: A delightful way to attract and feed backyard moths. Mix up a concoction of moth bait (food), and “paint” it on your trees and fence posts. Visit the CU Museum web site for recipes and tips. Be careful though, this can attract bears, too!!

Flowers: Not all moths are nocturnal, some are active during the day, and many of these moths feed at flowers. Look closely at flowers, some moths may be feeding there. Remember butterflies are also attracted to flowers, and moths can often look like butterflies. Pay careful attention to the differences.

Compare your observations with your classmates. Use a moth field guide to try to identify some the moths you attracted.

Entomologists are scientists who study insects like moths. Some entomologists study how insects can be helpful to people. Some study how insect pests make it hard to grow food, or can cause disease. Others study insects to learn about the environment today and millions of years ago. Entomologists can even help police solve crimes! There are more insects on Earth than any other kind of animal - so there are plenty for you to study.



Visit the CU Museum web site at: <http://cumuseum.colorado.edu/>