

Flutterby's: The Magic of Butterflies



Who has not been enchanted by the delicate and colourful wind dancers known as butterflies? There is something heart-warming about the gentle flutter of a butterfly, or as one poetic person rephrased it - a "flutterby" - sailing from flower to flower

One of the first butterflies to emerge in spring is the Mourning Cloaks. Their reddish-brownish colour is reminiscent of traditional cloaks worn by people who were in mourning. Mourning Cloaks spend the winter frozen as adults in tree crevices and underneath bark. Their body produces proteins with anti-freeze in a process called cryo-preservation. When the warm spring sun thaws them out, they begin to flit about looking for food. If you can sidle up close to a Mourning Cloak, watch how its curled tongue called a proboscis, unfurls as it sucks up nectar or sap. Amazingly butterflies taste with their feet. You can attract butterflies like the Mourning Cloak by making a magic butterfly potion.

Magic Butterfly Goop

Butterfly visits, however, can be few and far between. But you can increase your chances of seeing butterflies by creating your very own magical potion. This recipe can attract such beauties as mourning cloaks, viceroys, and swallowtail butterflies as well as a variety of moths. The concoction even works on a balcony. If you examine the ingredients you might think - hey, that's a bit strange! It turns out that some butterflies love fermented fruit, tree sap,

mud and even mammal dung. Beware for this recipe may also attract yellow jackets and other stinging insects. But with a bit of patience, you'll be amazed by the visitors to your potent butterfly bait. Have a camera ready so you can take some pictures. Moths may visit the goop at night.

You'll need: 1 cup of white sugar, 1 can of beer (non-alcoholic works too), 4-5 overripe bananas, water, 2-liter jar with lid.

Here is how: Mix sugar, bananas and a little water in a blender. Pour mixture and beer into jar. Top off with just enough water to make it goopy and sticky. Place lid on jar loosely (mixture will ferment). Place mixture in shallow dish outside or paint on trees, rocks, etc. You can even soak a sponge in this mixture and hang it from a tree branch. Check your bait sites (at night, too) to see what winged splendors are enjoying your magic potion!

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