

# MAGNIFICENT Moths

by **jacob** rodenburg

Fluttering around street lights and hovering over candle flames, moths are sometimes thought of as the butterfly's drab cousin. But with evocative names like Graceful Ghost moth, Shaggy-spotted Wockia, and Elegant Tailed Slug moth, there is more to moths than meets the eye!

Believe it or not there are ten times more moths than butterflies in the world! And in North America alone, there are more than 12,000 species of moths. Moths come in a wonderful variety of sizes, shapes and colours. From very large, like the Atlas moth with a wingspan of almost a foot, to the weirdly wonderful, like the beautiful wood nymph moth that looks like bird poop (on purpose!). And forget the idea that moths are only brown: just take a look at the Rosy Maple moth with hues of red, yellow, black, and gold, or the magnificent white-lined Sphinx moth that resembles a hummingbird with rose-coloured hind wings and beautiful brushes of white!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Even though they don't have a nose, moths are good at sniffing! They use their feathery antennae to detect even the faintest of odours. A Giant Silkworm moth can smell a female from over 11 kilometres away (talk about having a nose for news!). And like bees, moths are amazing pollinators. Their plump, hairy bodies help them pick up and transfer pollen from any flower they land on! Moths especially love white, fragrant flowers that bloom at night, such as the yucca plant or moonflower.

## MAGICAL MOTH POTION

This special recipe will attract both moths and butterflies. The ingredients might seem a bit strange but moths and butterflies love fermented fruit, tree sap, and even urine (optional!).

*Beware!* This recipe may also attract yellow jackets and other stinging insects.

1 pound sugar  
1 or 2 cans stale beer (optional)  
3 mashed overripe bananas  
1 cup molasses or syrup  
1 cup fruit juice  
1 shot rum (optional)

## INSTRUCTIONS

Mix all the ingredients thoroughly and use a brush to paint on trees, rocks, fence posts, or stumps. You can even soak a sponge in this mixture and hang it from a tree branch. Keep visiting your spot to see what splendid lepidopteran sips your magic potion! •

For more moth fun, head over to  
[ecoparent.ca/kids/magnificent-moths](http://ecoparent.ca/kids/magnificent-moths)



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Giant Silkworm Moth

	Moth	Butterfly
Wings	Tend to hold wings outstretched	Tend to fold their wings together
Behaviour	Nocturnal (active at night)	Diurnal (active during day)
Cocoon or Chrysalis	Moth caterpillars make a silken cocoon around their body	Butterfly caterpillars make a hard shell chrysalis that emerges from inside of their body
Body	Thicker abdomen	Thinner abdomen
Antennae	Thicker, feathery antennae	Thinner club-shaped antennae



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Atlas Moth