

A Few Pointers on looking at Insects in the Garden-

part 3 Moths

Moths are mostly active at night and resting during the day and therefore hard to find. However, the caterpillar stage can often be located during the day. A great place to start looking for moth caterpillars is on leaves of many bushes. You simply scan the plant for any eaten leaves and look closer to see what may be eating them. A commonly encountered moth caterpillar is the Looper type. Known as a looper because of the way it walks, there are many different varieties, each type representing a different species.



← Looper caterpillar
chewing on leaves.

One way to find moths at night is → to attract them, using a fruit bag. This is made from a piece of shade cloth or similar material with netting type effect. Add some over-ripe fruit and hang under a tree. Moths such as fruit sucking moths will be attracted to feed on the fruit. They will stick their proboscis through the netting and suck on the fruit juices.





← **A**nother way to attract moths at night is to use a light. By hanging up a light and a screen you can attract many different moths. At night while flying the moths see the light and fly in and land on the screen. Even a light on an open porch can attract moths. The moths will simply fly away either when daylight appears or the next night.

Beware of other critters that may be hiding in the plant foliage such as Spiders and Stink bugs.

1. It is not easy to feed moths, some don't have mouth parts.
2. If you do wish to look at moths, it is easier to feed the caterpillar and rear out the moth. Once you have located a caterpillar and have seen it feeding, only then can you keep the caterpillar.
3. To keep the caterpillar you will need a large container, always add a twig in the jar so the insect can take hold. Take some small branches from the food plant. Add these to the container. Best way to do this is to put them in a jar full of water, cuttings are put through the holes in the lid.
4. Don't forget to have air-holes in the lid of your container otherwise the insect will die.
5. Clean and change the food plant every couple days.

In general, a hairy caterpillar will be a moth caterpillar. A cocoon made from silk will be a moth.

Insects You Should NOT Handle.

Caution should always be applied when it comes to picking up any insect. Insects like water bugs, assassin bugs, hairy caterpillars and of course wasps, bees, stink bugs and biting ants, all can either sting, bite, pinch or spray you with smelly fluids. So it is important to learn more about insects and have an enjoyable experience. Most insects pose no harm to us humans.

You will come across spiders during your search, best to avoid all spiders, unless an adult can confirm your find as harmless.