

# Host a Moth Party!

All Ages

North America has about 700 different kinds of butterflies to delight us by day but 11,000 species of moth to amaze us at night. They come in all sizes and patterns with colours ranging from drab to dazzling. Once you start watching you'll be hooked. Besides, who doesn't like playing outside after dark with flashlights and staying up past bedtime?

Moth watching is simple and exciting! You can just leave the porch light on or follow these steps for more fun.

To host a Moth Party you need a sheet, lights, bait and guests to share the experience with.

⇒ A sheet - A plain white sheet for the moths to land on will make it easy to see them. Hang the sheet from a clothesline, rope, railing, or wall. You may wish to put one on the ground to see that no wildlife ends up underfoot.



⇒ Lights - Moths are attracted to artificial light. Hanging caged utility lights (powered with an outdoor extension cord) from a stepladder will work well. Make sure your lights are secure and safely positioned in case they are bumped into in the dark. Direct the light onto the sheet. Some moths like bright white light and others like black (ultraviolet) light. Inexpensive black light bulbs are available at hardware stores and party-supply stores. Using both light sources will greatly increase the diversity of moths attracted to your sheet.

⇒ Bait - Some moths prefer sweets over bright lights. Here is a recipe for their favourite sweet treat. 1 very ripe (black peel) banana, 1 cup packed brown sugar, 1/2 cup beer. Mix all together until well blended. It is best if left to ferment for a few days but not essential.

To use the bait, simply paint the mixture, with a wide paintbrush, onto the bark of a tree or trees at eye level (or a wall you can rinse off). Paint a patch about 30 cm by 30 cm. The moths will be drawn to your sweet bait. Use flashlights to check as often as you like to see who is dining. Watch closely. Perhaps you will see a moth stick out its tongue (proboscis) and sip up the feast.

Other insects may join the party. All are fascinating in their own way.

Nature is out there waiting for you day and night. Throw a party and celebrate!

**Tip:** Here are 2 sites to help you identify moths

<https://onnaturemagazine.com/butterfly-and-moth-guide.html>

<https://www.insectidentification.org/butterflies-and-moths.asp>

