

Saturniid Moth

Carolina™ CareSheet

Immediate care and handling

As soon as you receive the cocoons, soak them in room-temperature water for 30 to 60 seconds. Then each day, lightly spray the cocoons with room-temperature water until the adults emerge.

If the cocoons do not produce moths within 4 to 8 weeks, they are probably in diapause (hibernation). To break diapause, refrigerate the cocoons for at least 2 weeks at 7° C (45° F) and allow another 2 weeks at room temperature. If moths have still not emerged, refrigerate again for 1 to 2 months before returning to room temperature.

Habitat setup and maintenance

Lightly mist the cocoons daily with room-temperature water. When the moths are ready to emerge, they will attach themselves to one end of their cocoon, rip the silk using hornlike projections, and secrete a substance that breaks down the silk's binding. The moths often make a lot of noise during the process.

Adults moths usually emerge mid-morning. They release built-up liquid waste from the pupal stage. Because adults expand and stretch their wings as soon as they emerge, provide adequate room to avoid deformed wings. Moths need a piece of screen or cheesecloth to climb onto. They will stay on this surface until their wings have dried and hardened. After this point, the moths will rest until nighttime, as they are nocturnal. At night, they fly around to find a mate.

Moths have a short lifespan; they typically die within a week of finding a mate and reproducing. Do not feed during the adult stage, as they survive on fat stored from the larval stage.

FAQs

What plant leaves do the larvae prefer to eat?

Luna larvae like leaves of sweetgum, American beech, red maple, hickories, white oak, black cherry, willows, American chestnut, and smooth sumac. Polyphemus larvae prefer oak, hickory, elm, maple, and birch; however, apple, beech, ash, willow, linden, rose, grape, and pine plants are also acceptable. Promethea larvae eat tulip trees; however, they will also feed on ash, azalea, bayberry, barberry, birch, buttonbush, cherry, lilac, plum, poplar, sassafras, spicebush, and sweetgum.

How do I know if the pupae are dead or just in diapause?

Poke them in the leathery region between the two abdominal segments to see if they squirm. Also, live pupae will sink when placed in water; dead pupae will float. The chrysalis of live pupae will have more of a luster than dead pupae.

What kind of moth do I have?

Actius luna, *Callosamia promethea*, *Philosamia cynthia*, or *Telea polyphemus*. The type of moth you receive will depend on your location. OR, WA, and ND receive only Luna or polyphemus.

Can I release the moths once they emerge as adults?

We strongly recommend giving them to another individual if you do not wish to keep them. We do not advocate the release of organisms into the environment, as in most states it is illegal.

Please contact your local Department of Agriculture for any restrictions on release of organisms. You may also freeze them before disposal.

Problems?

We hope not, but if so contact us. We want you to have a good experience.

Orders and replacements: 1-800-334-5551, then select Customer Service.

Technical Support and Questions: caresheets@carolina.com



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