

Luna Moth



Luna Moth Care

- Unpack your cocoon and soak it in tepid water (room temperature) for 60 seconds.
- Place your cocoon in a mesh insect house or any enclosed container at least 11 inches high by 11 inches in diameter. Your cocoon may wriggle a bit.
- Place a small branch or stick in your house to give your moth a place to hang once it has emerged.
- Spray cocoon lightly with tepid water every other day. A plant sprayer with a fine mister works well for this. Don't let your cocoon get too wet. Make sure that it isn't sitting in a puddle.
- The moth will emerge from the cocoon within two to four weeks. Release it in a dark or shady place a day or two after it emerges.

About the Luna Moth

The luna moth (*Actias luna*) is common in woodlands of the United States and Canada east of the Great Plains. This beautiful, velvety green moth has wingspans of 2.75 to 4.25 inches. Each wing has a transparent “eye spot” and is rimmed with pink or yellow. The luna’s body is large, pure white, and fuzzy. Its antennae are large and feathery.

The luna moth caterpillar is large, yellow-green, and fuzzy. It feeds on birch, persimmon, sweet gum, hickory, walnut, or sumac leaves. The adult luna moth has no mouth and no digestive tract. It lives for only a few days (4 to 10 in captivity) and spends the energy it stored as a caterpillar on reproduction.

How are Moths Like and Unlike Butterflies?

- Moths and butterflies are both insects. They have three main body parts (head, thorax, abdomen). They have six legs. Their bodies are covered by a hard exoskeleton.
- Moths and butterflies have the same life cycle: egg, larva, pupa, and imago.
- Moths and butterflies have wings and antennae.
- Moths have relatively large antennae that look like tiny



feathers. Butterflies’ antennae are thin and often have knobs on the ends.



- Most moths fly at night and rest in the day. (A few moths fly in the day or at dawn and dusk). Butterflies fly in the day and rest at night.
- Most moths lay their wings flat when they rest. Butterflies hold theirs upright.
- Many moths wrap their pupas in cocoons, which are made of leaves (like luna moths’) or spun from silk secreted by the caterpillar (like silk moths’). Butterflies do not make cocoons. Their pupal exoskeletons—called chrysalises—are strong and protective.



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