



Night Creatures

Collecting insects and getting specimens from clients is normally a daytime affair, but there are also critters out there that prefer the nighttime to carry on their activities. Just think of the mosquitoes that bother us as we sit on our decks and patios.

There are myriads of insects that are nocturnal (night active) and are very interesting. Among these are the moths (who hasn't seen them around your porch lights?), beetles and even types of wasps, craneflies and other orders of insects.

One of the methods of attracting desirable insects at night is the use of a black light (ultraviolet). Hang a white sheet on a clothesline and place a blacklight so that the ultraviolet light bounces off the sheet. Insects that are attracted to the light and land on the sheet can easily be collected. It's sort of like an insect smorgasbord, you get to pick and choose from a great variety of offerings. Of course, this type of activity cuts into our sleep time, since the best collecting times are between 10 PM and 2 AM!

Another method of taking an inventory of our nighttime insect visitors is to do baiting. A sweet syrupy compound of molasses, beer and brown sugar can be painted on a tree or board, and certain sweet-loving insects are attracted to the sticky stuff. Another bait, especially good for beetles, is fresh meat placed in the bottom of a glass quart jar and the jar buried up to the lip in the ground. Insects, smelling the offering, fall into the jar and cannot climb out.

For some undesirable insects baiting works well, too! Dampened, loosely rolled up newspapers left outside on the lawn or under your plants will attract earwigs by the score! To get rid of them the next day, simply unroll the paper and dispatch them.

One more method to collect is a nighttime insect hunt with a flashlight. No, this is not a "snipe" hunt! Root weevils feed on your Rhodies at night and can easily be discovered and destroyed using this method.

Please, however, do not use bug zappers or foggers to rid your yard of nocturnal insects! Bug zappers and poisons are indiscriminate in their killing power, and obliterate many beneficial or ornamental critters. Show appreciation for these denizens of the night that help pollinate our flowers and "light up" the night with their presence. Remember, there are many six-legged creatures that are active outdoors while we are sleeping snug in our beds indoors.

