



# Backyard Wildlife



## WILDLIFE HABITAT NOTES: Food Plants For Kentucky Moths

The principle food plants for the larval, or caterpillar, stage of moths are the leaves of trees and shrubs. Adult moths prefer nectar or nectar, fruit or sap, and some species also feed on carrion and dung. The adults of some moth species (e.g., cecropia, luna, polyphemus) do not feed at all but will lay their eggs on the preferred food plants used by their larvae.

Many moths feed only at dusk or in the nighttime, or on cloudy days, and little is known about their food preferences. Night-feeding moths prefer large, pale-colored, highly fragrant flowers that bloom at night, such as the evening primroses. The strong fragrance of sap running down tree trunks is very attractive to some moths, and they can be enticed into the yard with a mixture of brown sugar, beer, and overripe banana painted on tree trunks or fence posts. The most familiar daytime visitor may be the hummingbird clearwing moth, but many other sphinx moths also feed during the day.

The following list contains known food plants for some of the moth species most common in suburban areas.

SPECIES	CATERPILLAR FOOD	ADULT FOOD
Cecropia	ash, beech, birch, elm, maple, poplar, white oak, willow, wild cherries and plums	
Clearwings		
Hummingbird	dogbane, hawthorn, wild cherry, virburnum	nectar (wild bergamot)
Snowberry	honeysuckle, snowberry	
Imperial	basswood, birch, cedar, elm, maple, oak, pine, walnut	
Io	birch, elm, maple, oak, willow, others	
Luna	beech, hazelnut, hickory, sweetgum, wild cherry, willow	
Polyphemus	ash, birch, grapes, hickory, maple, oak, pine, roses	
Promethea	ash, basswood, birch, maple, sassafras, spicebush, sweetgum, tulip, wild cherry	
Regal	ash, blackgum, hickory, persimmon, sumac, sycamore, walnut	
Rosy maple	maple, oak	



**SPECIES****CATERPILLAR FOOD****ADULT FOOD**

## Sphinx

Abbot	grapes	nectar, bait
Azalea	azalea, blackgum, blueberry, viburnum	
Big poplar	tulip poplar, willow	
Blinded	basswood, birch, elm, oak, poplar, wild cherry	
Canadian	blueberry, white ash	
Elm	basswood, birch, elm, wild cherry	
Great ash	ash, plum, wild cherry	
Hog	grape, viburnum, Virginia creeper	
Hydrangea	buttonbush, water willow, wild hydrangea	
Lettered	grapes, Virginia creeper	
Nessus	grapes	nectar, day and dusk
Paw paw	blueberry, holly, paw paw	
Pink-spotted	paw paw	
Plebian	Trumpet creeper	
Small-eyed	birch, hawthorn, poplar, wild cherry, wild plum, willow	
Twin-spotted	ash, birch, elm, wild plum, willow	
Walnut	hickory, walnut, wild cherry	
Waved	ash, fringetree, hawthorn, oak	
Wild cherry	hackberry, wild cherry, wild plum	
White-lined	apple	

