

# Put on your finery and... **HOST a MOTH BALL!**

Night time is the perfect time to dance with the moths... Get your whole family out with you! How do you invite your guests? Just like children, moths and other insects love a sweet treat (many sip nectar as a food source). You can attract moths and other insects by painting a tree trunk with moth-attracting mixture of stale fruit juice or mashed over-ripe fruit and molasses.

## LOOK, DON'T TOUCH!

Lepidoptera (means "scaly-winged") is the name of the order of insects to which both moths and butterflies belong. The wings of butterflies and moths are made up of tiny overlapping scales (kind of like tiles on a roof) that are easily damaged, coming off in a powdery dust, if you touch the wings. So please observe but don't handle butterflies or moths.

## you'll need:

- Sugar or molasses
- Stale fruit juice
- Spoiled, mashed up fruit (bananas are good)
- A bowl and spoon
- Trees
- An old paintbrush
- A flashlight
- An insect field guide (borrow from the library if you can)
- A nature notebook to sketch and record who came to your Ball

## what to do:

- 1 Mix up the sugar, juice and fruit in the bowl.
- 2 Late in the day choose a tree, or trees, and use an old paintbrush to paint the mixture on the tree trunk.
- 3 Return about an hour later in the dark. Use your flashlight to see who's joined the Ball!
- 4 Go out again in half an hour and see who else came by.
- 5 Do it again during the day.
- 6 Using your nature notebook, describe (using words and drawings) the insects and other creatures that came to your Ball. Use your field guide to try and identify your guests.

For more ideas on how to give nature a hand visit the Young Naturalists' Club at [www.ync.ca](http://www.ync.ca). If you are already a member of the YNC remember you can use *Host a Moth Ball* as part of your Bronze Action Awards Quest!



**Fun Facts:** Moths and butterflies are both insects in the order Lepidoptera. Although many moths are active at night some are active in the daytime too and are often mistaken for butterflies. Moths are an important part of ecosystems, as pollinators when they are feeding on the nectar of flowers and as a food source for other species like birds and bats. Like butterflies, moths start out as a caterpillar and undergo an amazing metamorphosis to emerge as beautiful winged insects. Moths have developed some pretty cool strategies for avoiding being eaten: some moths have spots on their wings that look like eyes and frighten away predators, while others have amazing camouflage to help them hide. Learn more about the fascinating lives of moths at [www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org).