



## The glowworm

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I can't believe the year is nearly finished. We are headed quickly for Thanksgiving and then the 'end of the year' holidays. There are a few loose ends we can tie up for this year so we can start out 2005 with a bang. I was really happy with the collections at the Mississippi Fair this fall. There were 20 collections submitted this fall, a little down, but they were of good quality. Collectors need to be aware that dermestids can infest their collection at any time of year, so be sure to replenish your pest strip or moth balls before storing your collection. Critically review the specimens in your collection and plan for the replacements you need to make. **REMEMBER**, static collections are not eligible for contests. A static collection is one in which new specimens have not been added during the contest year. We saw a few of these this fall!

It's time for writing your Bee Essay! The subject and rules are included in this Glowworm, so take advantage of this opportunity. Mr. Harry Fulton and the Mississippi Bee Keepers give cash awards to the top three Mississippi Essays and we also award other journalistic efforts through 4-H. Many other states also award their entomological writers. Only one essay may go forward to the National contest from each state, so if you win in Mississippi you have a pretty good chance to finish high in the nation.

We are also accepting new questions for the 2005 4-H Linnaean Games. Questions submitted by contestants are used to select contest materials, so send your entries in before March. We have added a new resource for study: **The Practical Entomologist** by Rick Imes (ISBN0-671-74695-2). This book is fun to explore and might be a great one as a gift, so add it to your list. Send your Linnaean questions via email to [Mikew@ext.msstate.edu](mailto:Mikew@ext.msstate.edu).



The Mississippi Entomology Association recognized Ms Grace Layton at the annual meeting in early November. Grace was the first place Entomology visual presentations winner at 4-H Club Congress in June.



The December Glowworm will feature Entomological Culture, so if you have a poetic or literary contribution which deals with insects, send it to me and I'll include it .

### Featured Insect – Skippers

Anytime one visits their butterfly garden, they will most often encounter this small brownish butterfly which looks a little like a moth. In fact many people think of the skipper as being a cross between moths and butterflies. Their body is usually a little more robust and scaly than butterflies, but they fly actively in the day time and have the knob on the end of their antennae – except the knob has a hook. Skippers are from the family Hesperidae and are divided into the 'spread-winged skippers,' the 'grass skippers' and 'giant skippers.' Representatives of all of these can be found in Mississippi.

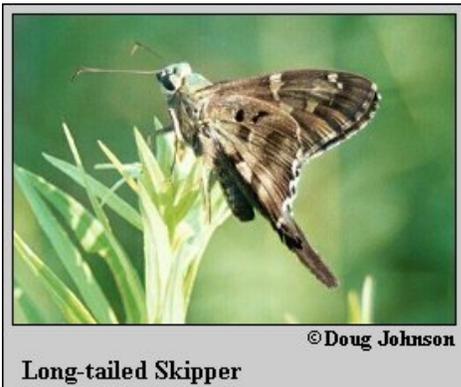


One of the more common is the Silver-spotted Skipper. Adults perch upside down under leaves at night and on hot or cloudy days. To seek females, males perch on branches and tall weeds, and occasionally patrol. Females lay single eggs near the host trees, like woody legumes (i.e. locust trees), and the caterpillars must find their proper host. Young caterpillars live in a folded leaf shelter; older ones live in a nest of silked-together leaves. Chrysalids hibernate. Adults nectar on many flowers, but almost never visit yellow flowers. There may be as many as 4 broods during the summer, depending on location. These critters range from Mexico to southern Canada.

Caterpillars are bright yellow-green, each body segment ringed with fine alternating black and yellow or greenish lines. The head is dark red-brown, much wider than first thoracic segment, bearing large orange spot above each antenna. Abdominal segments are marked with a dark spot above black spiracles. Caterpillars fashion silk-lined shelters, venturing out mostly at night to feed.



The Long-tailed Skipper females lay eggs under leaves in clusters of up to 20. Caterpillars feed on



leaves and live in shelters of rolled leaves of vines of legumes. Adults obtain nectar from a variety of plants including bougainvillea, lantana, and shepherd's needle.

Happy Buggin'

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Extension Entomologist