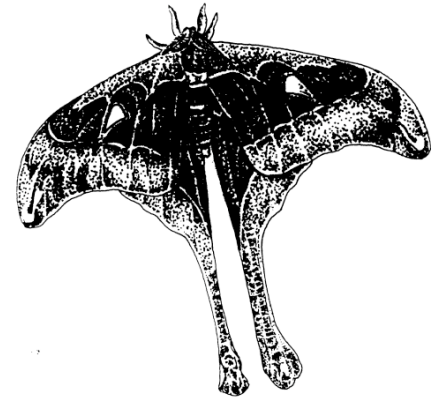


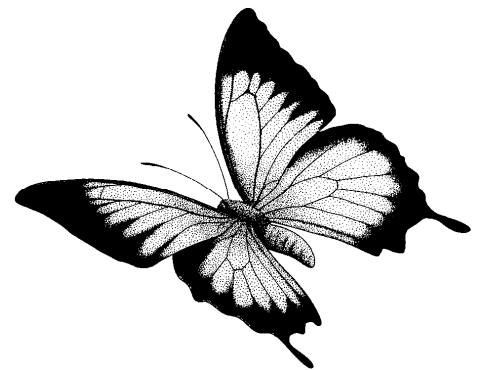
Tropical Factsheets

Butterfly and moth facts

- **Nearly 70 per cent** of Australia's 385 butterfly species are found in the rainforests of the Wet Tropics.
- The **Hercules Moth** (or Atlas Moth) of north Queensland is the **world's largest** moth, reaching a wing-span of about **25 cm**. It is a velvety brown colour.
- The Hercules Moths cannot feed because they don't have a **proboscis** (the long thin tube on the front of their heads) and therefore can't suck up food. Their caterpillars feed on the leaves of the **Bleeding Heart Tree**.
- **Giant Wood Moths** are the **heaviest** moths in the world, weighing over 30g.
- Butterflies and moths are still able to fly if their scales are removed. They are just less colourful!
- Some moths **taste terrible**, and advertise this fact with a warning of **bright colours** on their bodies and wings. After dark, however, when this visual signal is useless, they emit **ultrasonic clicks** which can be picked up by insectivorous bats. These clicks warn the bats that the moths are unpleasant to eat, and also jams the bats' sonar system.
- Certain moths can detect a 15-watt ultraviolet lamp from a distance of 250m. Nocturnal moths become active when it gets dark.
- **Some plants catch butterflies**. They can become snared on the sticky leaves of the insectivorous **Sundew**. The flowers of the **Rubber Vine** weed trap the legs or proboscis of butterflies as they search for nectar. They are unable to escape, and eventually die.
- **Ulysses Butterflies** are attracted to **red**, and often settle on red flowers or land on red cars.
- **Blue Triangle Butterflies** which fly around rainforest creeks, are attracted to **blue**, and often land on blue clothing.
- The **Black and White Tit Butterfly** is a pest of orchids. It lays its eggs on the flower buds and the caterpillars eat the flowers.



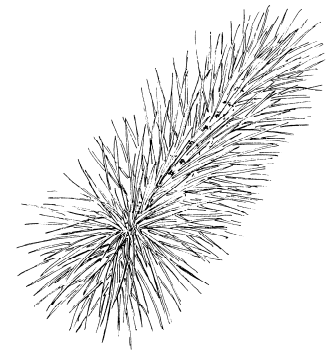
Hercules Moth



Ulysses Butterfly



- The **Evening Brown Butterfly** is a common open forest butterfly of the Wet Tropics. It changes its **colours** in winter and summer to camouflage itself against the background of the vegetation. These well-camouflaged butterflies rest quietly on leaf litter during the day, and wait until evening to fly.
- Caterpillars are **feeding machines**. In just two weeks they can grow to **3000 times** their original size. This would be like a **human** ballooning to the size of an **elephant!**
- **White Nymph** caterpillars feed in clusters on stinging trees.
- Some caterpillars can detect light through their skin.
- The caterpillars of the **Hawk Moth** and several other types of moths can **change their colour**. If they live alone, they are pale, but become dark if they live in dense populations. The colour is controlled by their hormones so that they're **camouflaged** in their environment and are less obvious to their predators.
- **Hairs and spikes** on a caterpillar are a warning to **stay away!** They can cause painful and itchy irritations and some of the spiky caterpillars inject a very nasty poison. **Look, but don't touch any caterpillars.**



Bag Moth (Boree) Caterpillar