

The Glowworm

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The summer is almost past and we are looking toward school and all the excitement that it brings. Some are embarking on class assignments for insect collections and others are trying to get collections ready for fairs and shows. So now is a good time to review some basics and maybe introduce a new twist or two. Fall (August, September and October) are generally the best time of year to collect insects. Of course there are critters which are only available at other times of the year, but in general there are more insects available during this 3 month period than at any other. Many species are multi-voltine (having more than one generation per year) and each subsequent generation is larger than the last, so a collector has a better chance of getting a critter in the fall. Dog day cicadas, preying mantis, most butterflies and even some of the larger moths are prolific at this time of year. Most of the hawk moths can be seen around lights at night and are easily taken. I have also seen a number of mantispids and some of the larger beetles around lights this summer.

We had two successful camps this summer, I've enclosed a few pictures to show-off this crop of 'bug chasers!' The June camp at Wood College was fun and informative. The July camp at Leroy Percy Park was a first for us in the delta. It was also outstanding, even if we did have to combat the 'skeeters and gators' to catch our six legged prizes. We had a total camp enrollment of 94 this summer. We had campers from all over Mississippi, from West Virginia, Ohio, Arkansas, Louisiana, Wyoming, Arizona, and Texas this year. A great big THANK YOU is extended to everybody who helped. The 2003 camp web pages will be up soon, look for them at the 4-H Entomology pages - <http://www.msstate.edu/Entomology/4-H/camp.html>.

There are a number of events coming up this fall. The Mid-South Fair in Memphis is a unique opportunity for 4-Hers to display their insects in a regional setting. There will be collections on display from Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi and possibly other states. "Prize money ain't bad either!" We will also have the Mid-South Region 4-H Linnaean Championship Games at the Fair on September 20. Mississippi will have 3 junior teams (Harrison, Tate and Webster) and 3 senior teams (Lee, Covington and Tate) in the competition in 2003. The Mississippi - State Fair is also a good place to exhibit entomological projects, so 4-Hers need to get finishing touches on projects and get them submitted.

The announcement for the 2004 Bee Essay contest has been mailed to all counties. I'm including a copy of the announcement here as a reminder. The Mississippi Bee keepers give cash awards to the top three essays.

Our feature insect this time is the cicada. In Mississippi each year the dog day cicada emerges in great numbers and the males begin their melodies...

Happy Bugging,

Michael R. Williams
Extension Entomologist

4-H ESSAY CONTEST ANNOUNCEMENT AND RULES

Sponsored by - The Foundation for the Preservation of Honey Bees, Inc.
and in Mississippi by the Mississippi Beekeepers Association

AWARDS: Cash Prizes to 3 Top Winners:

1st Place ----- \$250.00 2nd Place ----- \$100.00 3rd Place ----- \$50.00

Each State Winner receives an appropriate book about honey bees, beekeeping, or honey.

In addition to the national awards, listed above, the Mississippi Beekeepers Association also gives awards to the Mississippi winners.

TOPIC for 2004: SWARMING

A swarm of honey bees is fascinating - and it can be frightening for non-beekeepers. For the general public, seeing a swarm fill the air, then pitch on a limb - or even a car - is their introduction to the world of honey bees. Every seasoned beekeeper can relate a tale of an unusual swarm. What are the reasons for swarming? What does swarming accomplish for the bees? What is the effect on the beekeeper? One (only one) humorous - or otherwise interesting - swarming incident is a welcome addition to the essay.

Good leads for your research include your school and public libraries, local beekeepers, your county Extension agent, your local or state beekeepers association, the beekeeping professor at your state's agricultural college. The ABF website has links to other beekeeping sites. The 2003 winning essays are also published on ABFnet, as are prior years.

RULES: 1. Contest is open to active 4-H Club members only. 4-H'ers who have previously placed first, second, or third at the national level are not eligible; other state winners are eligible to re-enter.

2. Requirements (*failure to meet any one disqualifies*)

Preparation for Judging: **Typewritten, double-spaced, on one side of the paper following standard manuscript format. Length: 750 to 1000 words long. Write on the designated subject only. All factual statements must be referenced with bibliographical style endnotes.**

A brief biographical sketch of the essayist, including date of birth, gender, complete mailing address, county and telephone number, must accompany the essay. The word limit does not include the references, endnotes or the essayist's biographical sketch.

3. Essays will be judged on (a) scope of research - 40%; (b) accuracy - 30%; (c) creativity - 10%; (d) conciseness - 10%; and (e) logical development of the topic - 10%.

4. Essayists should forward essays to the **Dr. Michael R. Williams, Entomology and Plant Pathology Department, Box 9775, Mississippi State, MS, 39762-9775 postmarked no later than 20 January 2004.**

State judging will be completed and the winning state essay will be mailed to the ABF office before March 1, 2003. No essay received after January 20 will be considered.

5. **We encourage ALL 4-Hers to submit an essay!** Only one state essay will go to the national contest. The Mississippi Beekeeper=s Essay Committee will judge the state entries and all decisions are final. The state winners will be announced the first week in March, 2004.

6. Final judging and selection of the National Winner will be made by the Foundation's Essay Committee, whose decision is final. The National Winner will be announced by May 1, 2004.

7. All entries become the property of the Beekeeping Federation, Inc. and may be published or used as it sees fit. *No essay will be returned.*

8. **Deadline for entry in the MISSISSIPPI CONTEST is January 20, 2004.**

Cicadas are Homoptera in the family Cicadidae. Members of this family, 1-2 3/8" (25-60 mm) long, have membranous wings; the fore-pair of wings are twice the length of the hind pair. They hold their wings together over the body in a tent-like fashion when at rest. Males have sound-producing organs below the base of the abdomen. They produce their unique song by vibrating a drum-like organ known as a tymbal. Both male and female cicadas have hearing organs known as tympana located on the underside of the body.

Although sometimes called locusts, cicadas are non-jumpers, unlike grasshoppers and crickets. They are usually seen emerging or flying from empty nymphal skins that may hang by the thousands from trees during July and August after the large adults have emerged. Adults usually live from 2 to 6 weeks. Each species has its own buzz or a pulsating clacking sound. Some species, primarily eastern, have life cycles of 13 or 17 years and emerge in different cohorts which can be predicted. Thus, they are called periodical cicadas. After mating, females lay eggs in grass, bark or twigs; the eggs hatch later in the season and the new nymphs burrow underground and begin feeding on roots. Most of cicada's life is spent as subterranean nymphal stages feeding on the roots of trees that they later climb as adults. More commonly seen, annual or dog day cicadas emerge from their nymphal period in 1-3 years.

Adult cicadas feed on the sap of a variety of trees and shrubs.



There are a number of sites and whole groups of people interested in the study of cicadas. A good beginning is for researching cicadas is the site at the University of Michigan (below).

http://insects.ummz.lsa.umich.edu/fauna/michigan_cicadas/Periodical/Index.html

Other sites are also very informative and neat. Check them as well:

<http://www.cicadamania.com>

<http://osipov.org/insects/top/index.php>

Campers and camp activities during 2003

