



Steve Graser / www.beautyofnature.net

Pollination by Moonlight

Do you work away from home, able to enjoy your garden only in the evening and on weekends? Why not create a “moonlight and fragrance” garden.

Enticing sights, alluring smells, and elegant moth pollinators will reward you after the sun goes down.

Moths outnumber butterflies by at least 10 to 1. Most go unnoticed, but the long-tongued hawkmoths are highly specialized floral visitors that fly and may even look like hummingbirds. These efficient pollinators are the stars of many an evening show, both near and far.

On Madagascar, botanists discovered night-blooming star orchids (*Angraecum sesquipedale*) with floral nectar spurs up to 14 inches long. The pollinator was unknown. Charles Darwin predicted that a moth with a foot-long tongue (*proboscis*) would eventually be found as the pollinator of these orchids. Years later, his prediction proved correct.

Closer to home, night-blooming jasmine, four o'clocks (*Mirabilis* spp.), and even some cacti are just the meal ticket that moths need. Moth flowers produce heavenly sweet scents, copious amounts of nectar, and are usually white or cream-colored to reflect the moonlight.



Moth Garden