

WILD SILK MOTHS OF THE UNITED STATES, SATURNIINÆ, EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES AND OBSERVATIONS OF NATURAL LIVING HABITS AND RELATIONSHIP. By Michael M. Collins & Robert D. Weast. Collins Radio Co., Cedar Rapids. 138 pp. Available from: Wild Silk Moths, 201 34th Street, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, U. S. A.; price \$4.25.

This little book (may be read at a single sitting) contains a great deal of useful information on the species of giant silk moths occurring naturally in the United States of America. This includes moths of the saturniid subfamily Saturniinae mainly, but the genus *Automeris* (Hemileucinae) is included also because of its popularity with amateur breeders.

The book is copiously illustrated with excellent photographs (although somewhat light in tone, no doubt from the reproduction process) and is organized into two main parts: Part I, United States species, under which are discussed, for each species, (1) habitat, (2) breeding habits, (3) breeding in captivity, and (4) collecting; general remarks are given also under each genus or subgenus; Part II, Studies and experiments, under which are discussed, (1) population dynamics, (2) breeding flights, (3) parasites, (4) diseases, (5) breeding, and (6) hybrids.

There is a nearly complete coverage of species and subspecies and the discussions are detailed and mostly based on personal observations by the authors. Much new information is recorded also. In these respects lies the greatest value of the book both to the non-professional collector and breeder — he may find reliable information to aid him in obtaining and rearing not only the better known eastern species, but also the lesser known southwestern species as well — and to the research worker — he may utilize the first-hand biological data in comprehensive studies on phylogeny, physiology of sexual attraction, geographical distribution, etc.

Critically speaking, I find a few dubious or meaningless statements, such as, "They [the larvæ of two species] have gaudy, scarlet tubercles which *make them appear* poisonous or dangerous." (p.80), and "Once the scent is detected, the male flies against the wind. This action suggests the use of *eyesight* for determining the wind direction." (p.91) [*italics mine*]. Also disturbing are the sometimes loose style, incompletely cited and scarce source references, non-italicized latin names, and capitalization of the initial letter of species-group names. Some of these points may be excused because the book is not intended as a scientific work.

All in all, I would say that the authors' purpose is well served by their book, "... to present various aspects of the subject with the hope of creating enthusiasm and to be of help to the breeder or student who plans to do work with these fascinating insects."

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