



The glowworm



Volume XVII No. 1

February 2009

2009 Bug Camp Dates

Bug Camp 2009 will return to Mississippi State's campus this year and we will be only hosting one. Mark your calendars - **June 14 - 18, 2009**. And, after too long of an absence, Dr. Jerome Goddard is back! He has recently joined the MSU Entomology and Plant Pathology Department and we are looking forward to his humorous sessions and briefing on medical entomological topics. No doubt we will see some old timers returning for this. We will be making a few trips to the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge to collect and there are some other activities we have never done before that we are working on, that I am sure you will not want to miss.

We are experimenting with several things this year including online registration. Go to http://www.cfr.msstate.edu/wildlife/conservation_camp/index.asp and scroll down to **Basic Insect & Plant Ecology** - this is what you are looking for!

For the past few years we have been developing an insect - plant interaction component for camp, and this year we are growing the plant component. Dr. Lelia Kelly, who has been camping with us *for years*, is working overtime to prepare exciting plant activities to accompany our standard entomological events. I can promise you your teachers never showed you some of the things you will see plants do during camp this summer!

We will be holding camp on campus at Mississippi State University this summer. We will use a log cabin on Blackjack road that belongs to the Wildlife and Fisheries Department as our base of operations and stay in the dorms. Since we are back on campus you can expect some interesting events at the Clay Lyle Entomology Building. We are just beginning to set these up, and as we do, we will share a few with you through the Gloworm.

Parents who accompany campers and campers who come with a brother and sister will get a little financial break at last. For years we have wanted to provide families with a little help so we are experimenting with this as a way to encourage families to camp and collect together.

If you have questions about camp please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at jguyton@cfr.msstate.edu or 662-325-3482.

Buggy Night Out at the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge Planned

We had so many bug chasers at the last buggy night out we are doing it again on **May 2, 2009**. Dr. Mike and I are planning on setting up some black lights mid-afternoon and will bring a few nets with us for those who would like to do a little afternoon collecting before it gets dark. We will also demonstrate how to pin insects and help participants pin a few that they collect, describe 4-H entomology projects and show a slide show of past entomology camps.

And if early collecting is any indication it will be a buggy spring and summer. We are already seeing red wasp, bees, stoneflies, moths and lady beetles.

2008 Bug Camp South

We finally took Bug Camp south again and enjoyed the accommodations at the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. David Held took the lead on organizing this bug camp and we found the USM facilities much to our liking. We were furnished a large room in the dorm to use for our lab and access to the Natural History museum where we did an activity or two including a cockroach dissection. The dorm rooms even had private baths - now, that is camping in style!

Collecting on campus was not great, however, we found the bugs! In large measure thanks to Mr. Bill Sanford and son, Andrew, who allowed us to collect on their farm just west of Hattiesburg. We also made a field trip to the Crosby Arboretum, thanks to camper and Crosby Senior Curator, Pat Drackett who was camping with her son Peter. We ended up with only 13 campers and assorted adults so the total number of insects collected was low. That said, we collected around 380 insects in 18 orders (*55 different* insects reported). We had a small group of older campers who lead their group aggressively collecting, pinning and identifying and really expanded the orders and insects collected that should be mentioned. The group, Thunder Bugs, including D. J. Failla, Mystina and Treyland Swain and new campers Lauren Chatelain and Coley Dawson collected 18 orders! Congratulations Thunder Bugs!

As far as Dr. Mike and I are concerned the hero for the southern bug camp was Cheri Abrahams! Cheri is a graduate student of Dr. Held's, from India. Cheri with his always happy can-do attitude has been with us for a couple previous camps. You may remember the article on his research from the last Gloworm. Cheri lead the dissection after commenting he had not dissected a cockroach since he came to the US a couple years ago. We will miss Cheri because he is headed to Georgia to work on his doctorate.

Buggy Night Out and BugFest Were Huge Successes!

Buggy Night At the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge a Huge Success

Dr. Mike's daughter Michelle Gaona and son Julian joined Marion Sansing, Peggy and me that afternoon to get the sheets and lights up and to begin assisting early arrivers collect insects. The early arrivers were there on a mission - completing their school collections - and



they did. Then, all of a sudden the room swelled to overflowing as 60 to 80 more insect enthusiasts arrived greatly exceeding our expectations! After a brief program we split the group and half headed for the sheets while we taught others how to pin their insects. There was a steady progression of collectors visiting the sheets and then coming inside to identify or pin their insects.

BugFest Returns to the Crosby Arboretum by Senior Curator Pat Drackett

BugFest made a triumphant return to the Crosby Arboretum in September! The Arboretum is an incredibly unique site that features plants native to Mississippi, and is located in Picayune. Offering a variety of public recreational and educational opportunities in a beautiful natural environment, the Arboretum is part of the MSU Extension Service. The public had been clamoring for BugFest, as it had been before Katrina since the last event. This year's resounding success can be attributed to the sound skills acquired in MSU's summer Bug Camp by several of the BugFest instructors.

D.J. Failla, a 14 year-old three-year participant in the entomology summer camp, played the major role in BugFest by leading groups in night insect hunts and providing the participants with detailed instructions on mounting their insects. D.J.'s sisters, Belle (age 13), Marella (age 12) and brother Lucien (age 8), all long-time 4-H members and past Bug Camp attendees, added their help and especially their enthusiasm to the event. Peter Drackett (age 10), who enjoyed attending his first Bug Camp this past summer, also earned his stripes. Peter and D.J. tackled the monumental task of preparing the evening's collecting jars. And both boys fearlessly addressed the event's crowd of 160 persons - with D.J. providing collecting tips, and Peter giving his report on a recent visit to the New Orleans Audubon Insectarium. Tapping these summer Bug Camp veterans yielded a group of young persons who were not only knowledgeable, but displayed an extraordinary and infectious passion for their subject.



Now, let's focus for a moment on that image of a crowd of 160, gathered on the Arboretum's Pinecote Pavilion. Consider the fact that MSU had recently lost the entomology professor who had been instrumental in conducting this event in the past. And, any other potential "grown ups" with bug knowledge who were approached had scheduling conflicts that prevented them from participating. Rather than postponing the event's return, it was decided that "the show must go on." And, although Arboretum curator Pat Drackett had a completely absurd (and very short-lived) idea that - due to the lack of the availability of qualified instructors - it would be best to limit the program to only a few dozen children... it was soon apparent that it is quite unrealistic to include the word "Fest" in a program title, and then plan on capping the number of attendees.



So, it is no minor statement to say that – given the absolutely incredible size of the crowd that attended – the aforementioned young folks saved the day with their capable assistance during this event. Yea, Bug Camp, for turning out such great young instructors!

The rest, as they say, was history. The multitude of people who attended the Arboretum’s “bug’s night out” was a strong testimony to the local demand for more activities like this. The grand finale to the two-day event was a riveting presentation by the New Orleans Insectarium, who brought live insects to talk about, and dazzle the crowd.



In the end, many attendees entered positive, favorable reports, and asked when the next event would be held. It will most likely be in the near future, thanks to a recent grant from the local Wal-Mart that will allow the purchase of vital collecting equipment such as bug lights, nets, and mounting supplies. The Crosby Arboretum is looking forward to growing BugFest back to its full range of activities, such as offering the “roach races” that entertained crowds in the past.

With their equipment grant, they will be expanding their summer nature camp to include insect collecting, and incorporating other exciting program opportunities in insect exploration for children from 0 to 100!

Campers DJ Failla and Peter Drackett were so helpful at BugFest we would like to extend the opportunity to any camper to join us for these events and help. So when you see one of these events advertised give us a call and see if we need help - we almost always do and are always glad to see our campers!

Are You Photographing Insects or using Insects into an Art Exhibit?

Each fall we do an insect art competition and display everyone’s art at the Mississippi Entomological Association’s annual conference. The winner gets a discount on their camp registration!



Help us Plan Bug Camp

As returning campers know, we usually have a full agenda and this year will be no exception with the added plant component. Often during registration we get the question, “Are we going to _____?” So, if there is an old activity you think we should bring back, now would be the time to mention it. Sitting here finishing this newsletter I am reminded of so many interesting sessions we haven’t done in a long time. Dr. Held’s experimental fire ant repellent that did not work, Dr. Pote’s parasites - no she did not have parasites she brought samples for us to look at, the incredible deer fly attractant, cutting off a cockroaches head to see how long it would live, the wet sponge wars and insect scavenger hunt, etc. You may have some ideas we have never tried so email me and let me know. If we can squeeze it in and have the leaders we will.