African Moon Moth

Argema mimosae



Adult



Cocoon

REIMAN GARDENS
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

African Moon Moth

Argema mimosae

Order: Lepidoptera
Family: Saturniidae

Etymology: The origin of *Argema* is currently unknown. Mimosae is the plural form of the word mimosa, a tree also known as the silk tree.

Wing span: 4 – 5 inches (100 – 120 mm)

Habitat: African Moon Moths are found in tropical forests in areas where their host plant is present.

Host Plant: Larvae are known to feed on *Sclerocarya caffra, Rhus laurina, Commiphora mollis*, and *Spirostachys africana*.

Adult Food Source: As adults the African Moon Moths do not have functioning moth parts, so they will not feed.

Life History: At night females release a pheromone into the air. Males flying through the air sense the pheromone and follow it back to the female. The female and male, in some cases, can remain copulated until the next night. Each following night the female searches out host plants on which to lay her eggs.

Flights: There are two generations each year making it possible to see adults for a short time in the spring and fall.

Fun Facts: Females can lay a large numbers of eggs on a single plant. Considering the large amount a leaf matter each caterpillar consumers they can do a significant amount of damage to a plant. Since one of their host plants is the Marula tree (*Sclerocarya caffra*), which produces edible fruit, this beautiful moth is considered a pest during its larval stage.

Range:

