

Editor's Page

A Tiger in the House!

Every house has wildlife visitors now and then. They creep or fly in open doors and windows and some, such as spiders, can even take up residents in quiet corners. One day this summer a Garden Tiger Moth flew in our front door and was captured on camera. This moth has very distinctive markings, which are great for frightening off predators, such as small birds. The colourful 'tiger' pattern is produced by thousands of coloured scales on its wings. It may not be a wild cat but it is certainly looks like it should be related to one!



Garden Tiger Moth

Moths are however related to butterflies - but with a few differences. Moths generally come out at night and are less colourful than butterflies (though the Garden Tiger Moth is one of the exceptions!). When at rest they keep their wings flat and tucked in rather than upright and their antennae are feathery and without bobbles on the end (which is a characteristic of butterflies). For more information on moths see the Winter 2006 issue of Nature's Web.



As GAELIGE! We are delighted to have teamed up with An Gúm, who are translating Nature's Web into Irish. Issues are now available, as gaeilge, at:
http://www.gaeilge.ie/ForasnaGaeilge/An_Bhunscoil.asp

SEAFOOD RECIPE

Salmon Kiev in a Crust

WHAT'S NEEDED:

- 4 x 175g salmon fillets, skinned and boned (each one at least 2.5cm thick)
- 100g butter, softened
- 2 tablesp. fresh tarragon, chopped
- 1 tablesp. fresh chives, snipped
- 1 small garlic clove, crushed
- 500g packet puff pastry, thawed if frozen (all butter, if possible)
- A little plain flour, for dusting
- 50g tender young baby spinach leaves
- Good Pinch freshly-grated nutmeg
- 1 egg, beaten
- Salt and freshly-grated black pepper

What to do:

Serves 4

Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 6, 200°C (400°F).

Place the butter in a small bowl and beat in the tarragon with the chives, garlic and a little pepper and salt to taste. Spoon on to a sheet of clingfilm or non-stick parchment paper and shape into a roll about 2.5cm thick, then wrap tightly. Chill in the freezer for at least 10 minutes to firm up (or keep in the fridge for up to 48 hours until required, if time allows).

Cut the pastry into 8 even-sized sections and roll each one out on a lightly floured surface to a 23cm x 15cm rectangle, trimming down the edges as necessary. Place a salmon fillet in the centre of 4 of the pastry rectangles. Unwrap the tarragon butter, cut into slices and arrange on top, then cover with the spinach leaves. Season the spinach and add a little nutmeg.

Brush the edges of the pastry bases with a little of the beaten egg and lay a second sheet of pastry on top, pressing down to seal. Crimp the edges by gently pressing the edge of the pastry with the forefinger of one hand and between the first two fingers of the other hand. Continue all the way around the edge of the parcel, then repeat until you have 4 parcels in total. Using a sharp knife, make light slashes across each parcel but take care not to cut right through.

Place a baking sheet in the preheated oven for a few minutes. Meanwhile, brush the pastry parcels with the remaining beaten egg. transfer to the heated baking sheet and bake for 25-30 minutes or until the pastry is cooked through and golden brown. Arrange the salmon parcels on warmed serving plates.

Serving Suggestions

Delicious served with steamed samphire or green beans and hollandaise sauce.

Photo: © Bord Bia - Irish Food Board



Courtesy of Bord Bia - Irish Food Board.
www.bordbia.ie

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of Nature's Web!



Dear Reader,

Welcome everyone to the Autumn 2014 issue of Nature's Web. Looking out to sea from Sherkin Island, we often see huge tankers on the horizon. In this issue we are delighted to feature the captain of one such tanker, John O'Sullivan. It is fascinating to read about his work and how his ship transports oil around Europe.

We look at the Broad Bean, a tasty vegetable that you could start to grow this autumn, for an early crop next Spring. Thanks to Robbie Murphy, we can see what a 'Supermoon' looks like and Captain Cockle brings us back in time with Mesolithic Marine Tours! Check out nature news from around the world on page 10 and enjoy a giggle with the jokes on page 14.

We would love to hear your views and comments and suggestions for future articles. Have a good read!

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What is a Supermoon?



Photos courtesy of Robbie Murphy

Above is the Supermoon of 10th August 2014 compared to an average moon of 5th April 2014 - as seen from Sherkin Island.

The Moon is approximately 384,400 km from the Earth. That distance can vary, depending on the orbiting of the Moon and the Earth in relation to each other and to the Sun. The diameter of the Moon is 3,476 km but this does not change, whether it is closer to or further from the Earth. Though the physical size of the Moon does not change, every now and then a full moon will seem larger and brighter in the night sky. This happens when the full moon is at its closest point to Earth during its elliptical orbit. On these occasions, the Moon is known as a 'supermoon'. A supermoon can appear to be 14% bigger than the usual Full Moon and up to 30% brighter.

A supermoon occurs more often than we realise - every 13 months and 18 days. Weather conditions may not be good enough to see it however.

The supermoon effect is best seen when the moon rises just above the horizon and when the moon is near a landmark. The landmark gives it scale. On the right is a picture of Spain Tower, Baltimore, Co Cork, taken by Robbie Murphy on 8th September 2014.

Ireland had three supermoons in 2014. According to Astronomy Ireland, these three moons were closest to the Earth on 13th July at 2:10 am (356,088 km), on 11th August at 1:38 am (354,157 km) and 8th September at 12:27 am (355,392 km).



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The Scientific Name

The scientific name for a supermoon effect is a Perigee Moon. 'Perigee' is when the moon is at its closest point to the Earth. When a moon is at its furthest point from the Earth and this event coincides with a full moon, then the full moon is known as a Apogee Moon. 'Apogee' is when the moon is at its furthest point from the Earth.

When a moon is in perigee or in apogee, it is not always a full moon, so a supermoon may not occur.



A Harvest Moon

A Harvest Moon is actually a supermoon occurring around the autumn equinox (between the 21st & 24th September each year). Farmers gave it that name as the light from the moon helped them with their work.

A Giant Reflector!

The Moon itself does not produce light. The brightness of the moon is due to the light of the sun being reflected off the moon's surface - like a mirror. It is this reflected light that we see from Earth. The amount of moon surface that is reflected at any one time depends on where the Earth and Moon are in their various orbits and in relation to the Sun. This is the reason why sometimes we see a full moon or fractions of a moon or even no moon.

