

How can we help the glow-worm?

Become a glow-worm friendly gardener!

Glow-worms prefer long, untreated grass along footpath edges and roadside verges.

Gardens and hedgerows can also become vital glow-worm friendly habitats.

Make sure that you tend to your garden in a wildlife friendly way by leaving some areas of your garden to go wild, free from herbicides, pesticides and mowers!

Turn the lights down!

It is possible that males searching for glowing females can become distracted by artificial lighting.

If you live near to a glow-worm colony, please switch off any lighting installed in your garden during the main glowing season from June to August.

If you are lucky enough to spot a glow-worm, please leave it where it is for others to enjoy.



Photos by John Tyler/Robin Scagell/Galaxy
www.glowworms.org.uk

Where can I see glow-worms?

- Undisturbed grassy areas are good places to look.
- Footpath edges, road verges, churchyards, hedgerows, rough grasslands, heathlands and meadows.
- Even some gardens may contain colonies.

Devon Wildlife Trust nature reserves:

Chudleigh Knighton Heath, Andrew's Wood, Marsland and Bystock

Other glow-worm hotspots:

Around Bantham, Slapton Ley and along the Tarka Trail

For more information on Devon Wildlife Trust's nature reserves visit www.devonwildlifetrust.org

Devon Wildlife Trust is part of a national network of county Wildlife Trusts – a unique combination of local strength and national unity.

Could you help Devon's Wildlife?

Members are vital to the work of Devon Wildlife Trust. If you value Devon's wildlife and want to help secure its protection for the future please join us! Rates begin at as little as £2 per month.

To become a Devon Wildlife Trust member and/or volunteer:
call 01392 279244
email contactus@devonwildlifetrust.org
visit www.devonwildlifetrust.org

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Glowing,
Glowing,
Gone?



Devon

Caring for Devon's
glow-worms

Female glow-worm
Photo, Robin Scagell/Galaxy

Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future

What is a glow-worm?

A little light is disappearing from our lives. The glow-worm, once a widespread and familiar creature, is becoming a scarce sight. Anyone who has ever seen a glow-worm will remember the experience. Spotting the tiny golden green lights along a grass verge is one of the most enchanting of all summer wildlife watching experiences.

Glow-worms are not actually worms, they are beetles! They are dark brown and measure up to 25mm.

Female glow-worms give off a green-yellow phosphorescent light to attract a mate – it's this glow which makes glow-worm spotting easy and fun.

How do glow-worms glow?

Light is created when the female glow-worm releases the chemical luciferin which reacts with the oxygen in the air to produce a green-white light.



Why do they glow?

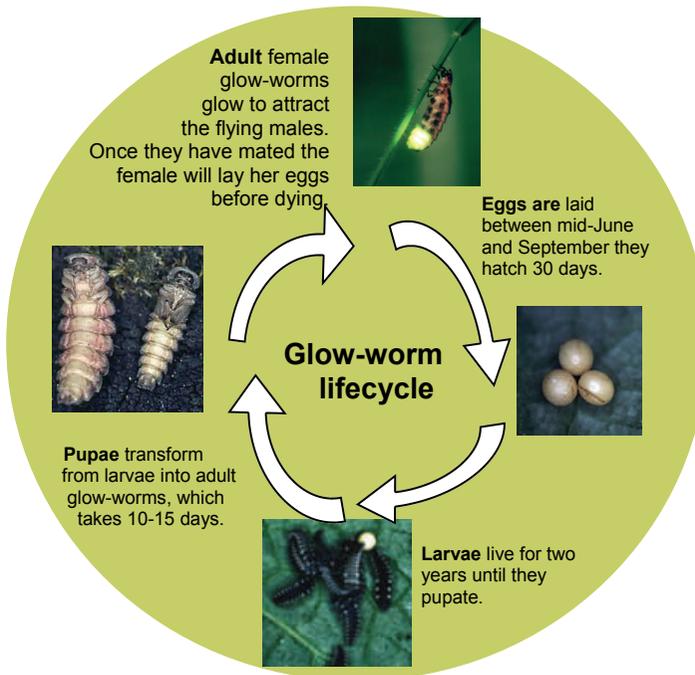
On summer nights male glow-worms fly around grassy areas looking for a mate. Female glow-worms can not fly but they can glow brightly, so they position themselves at the ends of grass stems and wave the two glowing segments at the end of their bodies to attract passing males.

What do glow-worms eat?

Glow-worms grubs (larvae) eat small snails. They paralyse the snails before sucking out the shell contents!

Adult glow-worms do not have mouths and therefore can not eat. They survive for just long enough to mate and lay eggs so they must conserve their energy by emerging and glowing at night for just a few hours.

As soon as her eggs have been laid the female glow-worm dies.



Why are glow-worms in decline?

Factors that we suspect are affecting glow-worms include:

Increased use of pesticides and herbicides

Efficient in the removal of weeds, the routine use of chemicals to control plant growth on roadside verges and in domestic gardens wipes out large sections of the natural food chain.

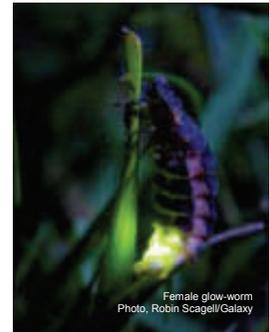


A glow-worm larvae must consume large numbers of snails, a traditional garden 'pest', to prepare for its transformation into an adult glow-worm.

Over-zealous grass cutting

Neat lines and tidy borders may be needed in some public spaces, however, wildlife has very different requirements.

In particular, the female glow-worm seeks out the stems of longer grasses. It is from here that she lures passing males towards her by waving her glowing abdomen.



Changes to glow-worm habitats

Over the centuries, as human populations have grown and spread, surrounding landscapes have been transformed for cultivation, housing or business uses.

This has resulted in vast areas that are inhospitable for glow-worms. Populations have become isolated and are now prone to local extinction.

Light pollution from cities

As urban areas spread, light pollution increases. Male glow-worms can become distracted by artificial lighting. This prevents them from locating a glowing female and reduces the likelihood of successful reproduction.