

Sharpen Your Mind

ational Train Your Brain Day, observed on October 13, celebrates the importance of mental fitness and cognitive growth. The day encourages individuals to engage in activities that challenge and stimulate the brain, from puzzles and reading to learning new skills or practicing mindfulness. By dedicating time to mental exercises, people can enhance memory, focus, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. Educational institutions, wellness organizations, and online platforms often promote brain-training exercises and resources to inspire lifelong learning. Observing this day reminds us that just as physical exercise strengthens the body, consistent mental workouts keep the mind sharp and resilient.

#INGENIOUS

On Stilts

The Tribe that walks on Stilts every day



In the floodplains of southern Bangladesh and parts of coastal India, there exists a little-known community whose lives are defined by an unusual skill, walking on stilts. For this tribe, stilts are not a novelty or a circus act, but an everyday necessity born out of the environment they inhabit. Surrounded by rivers, marshes, and mangroves, their villages remain partially submerged for much of the year. Instead of resisting the water, they adapted to it in a remarkable way: by learning to walk above it.

The stilts are simple yet ingenious. Each pole is cut to a height of five to seven feet, with a small wooden step fixed halfway up. The tribespeople fasten the stilts to their legs using ropes of coir or jute and learn to balance with surprising grace. From a young age, children are taught how to climb onto the bamboo poles and take their first cautious steps. By the time they are ten years old, they can walk, run, and even dance on stilts with ease.

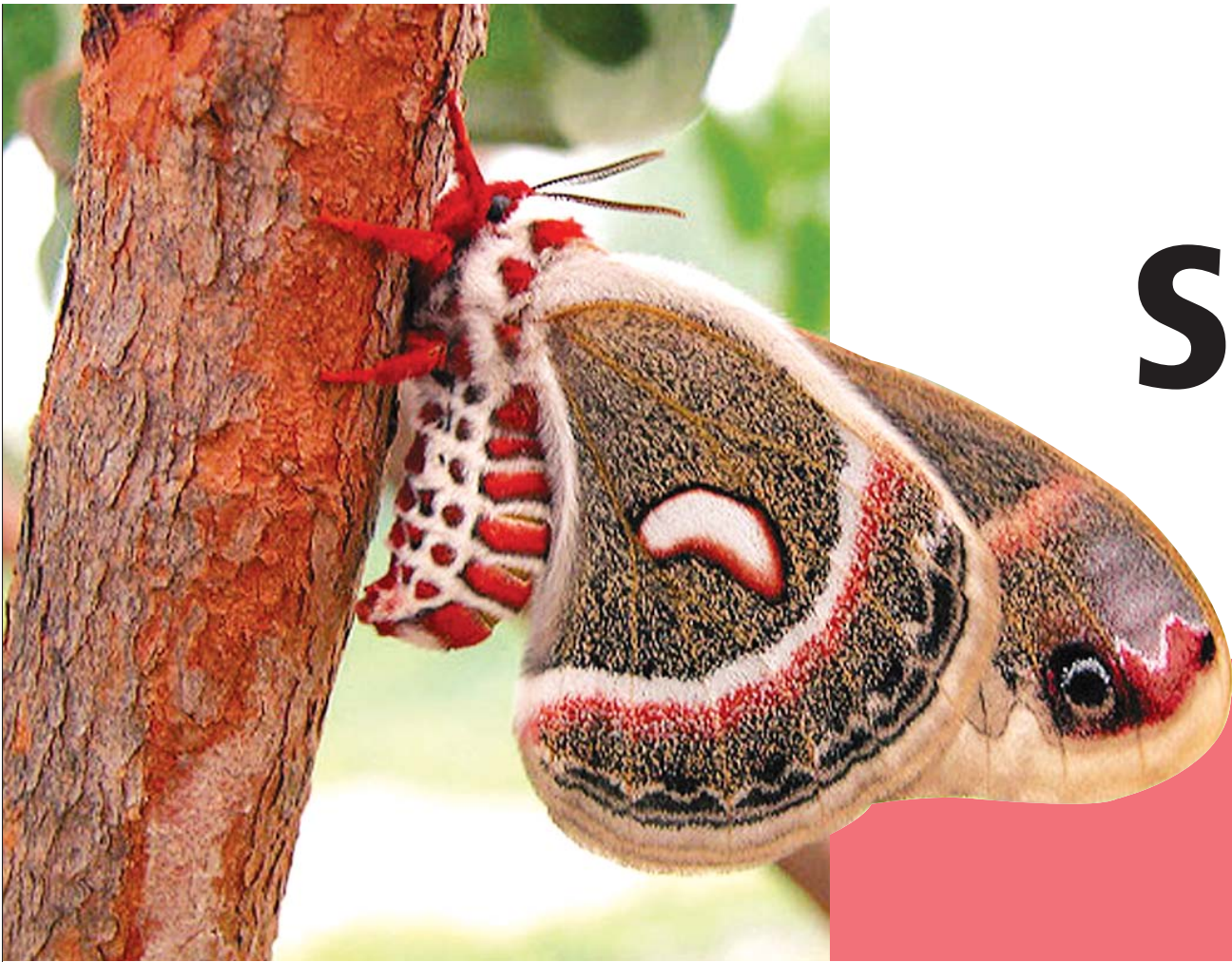
The skill is deeply tied to daily survival. During monsoon season, when paddy fields and homes are flooded, stilts allow them to travel from one hut to another, carry food supplies, or fish in deeper waters. Men often wade into rivers on stilts, casting nets without sinking into the mud below. Women use them to collect firewood, fetch water, or tend to floating gardens. In many cases, even routine social visits or trips to the market are made atop bamboo legs.

Beyond practicality, stilt walking has evolved into a cultural symbol. Festivals and harvest celebrations feature colourful stilt dances, where performers dressed in bright fabrics leap and twirl in unison. The rhythmic tapping of bamboo on wooden platforms becomes a form of music in itself. Elders of the tribe often tell children stories of their ancestors who first learned to 'walk above the floods,' framing stilt walking as both heritage and identity.

Anthropologists who have studied the community describe this adaptation as a fascinating example of human resilience. In regions where climate change has made floods more frequent and unpredictable, such traditional skills reflect how indigenous knowledge often precedes modern engineering solutions. While some younger members of the tribe now work in nearby towns and rely less on stilts, many families continue to uphold the practice, teaching it with pride to the next generation.

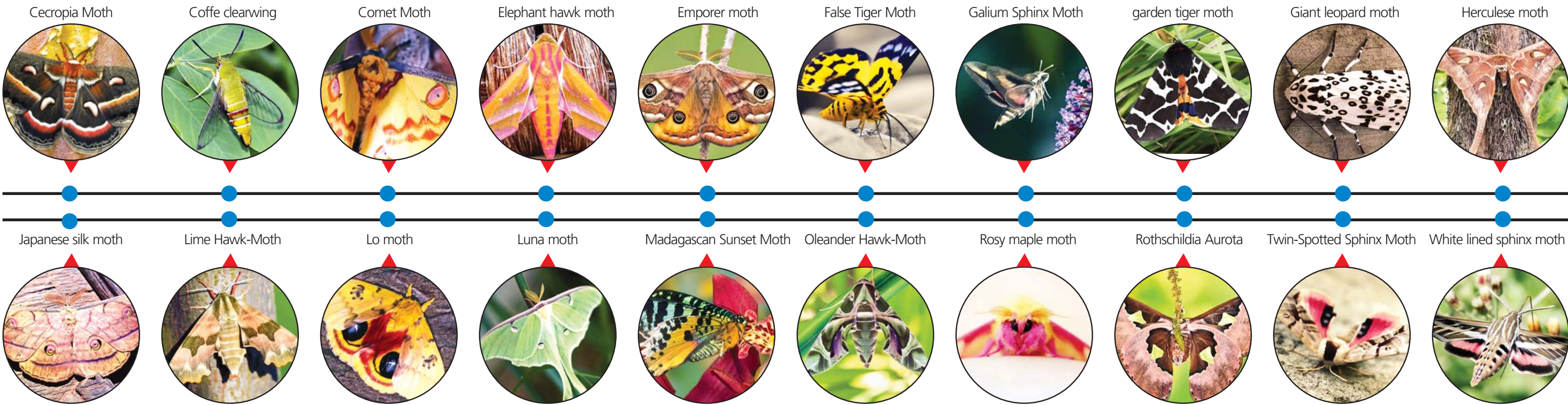
Modernization has inevitably reached their villages. Improved drainage systems and elevated roads have reduced waterlogging in certain areas. Yet, the tribe views its stilt walking tradition not merely as a response to necessity but as a cultural inheritance worth preserving. For them, the stilts symbolize harmony with nature, a way of living that accepts the dominance of water rather than fighting against it.

In a rapidly changing world, the tribe that walks on stilts every day offers a striking lesson: adaptability is as much about culture as it is about survival. Their bamboo legs may rise above the floods, but their roots remain firmly planted in tradition.



Butterflies Have Serious Competition From Moths

The garden tiger moth (*Arctia caja*) prefers colder climates, and can be found in the upper latitudes across North America, Europe, and Asia. Its zebra-like wing pattern wards off predators, and for good reason, the fluids in its body are toxic to other animals. It also generates a clicking sound that's been proven to disrupt bats' echolocation abilities, which serves as another escape tactic.



Jaymi Heimbuch

There are some 160,000 unique moth species, and many have colorful characteristics that rival those of their close relative, the butterfly.

Moths range from small, camouflaged species to large species that ward off predators with eye-popping displays to ward off predators. While beauty is subjective, we think many moths are just as beautiful, if not more so, than butterflies. Just have a look, and see, what do you think?

Here are 20 of the prettiest moths from around the world.

**Why Moths Matter**

Moths are the unsung heroes of pollination. We hope that the more we learn about them, the more motivated we'll all be to protect these beauties and their habitats. With a wingspan of nearly 8 inches, the comet moth (*Argema mittrei*) is one of the largest moths in the world. It's a member of the giant silk moths, a family of moths that produce silk while in caterpillar form to construct their cocoons. It has a thick, hairy body, feathery antennae, and distinctive eyespots to disarm predators. Also known as the Madagascar moon moth, it's only found in Madagascar. Due to habitat loss, it's now endangered, though it is still bred in captivity.

The lime hawk-moth (*Mimas tiliae*) is a medium-sized species

with a wingspan of about 3 inches. It's found throughout Europe, Asia, and North Africa. It has a band of green markings across its wings, which helps it hide in its woodland habitat. Males of the species are usually smaller than the females but have more colorful markings.

The twin-spotted sphinx moth (*Smerinthus jamaicensis*) is, in most regards, a dull-looking species, with one notable exception: while its body and forewings are brown, it has red hindwings with prominent blue and black eyespots. It can be found across North America, with a range that stretches from Florida to the Yukon. In its larval stage, it feeds primarily on fruit trees like crab apples and cherries.

The oleander hawk-moth (*Daphnis nerii*) is a large example of a hawk-moth, with a wingspan of 3 inches. It's best known for its flying ability, and when it hovers over flowers to feed on nectar, it's easily mistaken for a hummingbird. Also known as the army green moth, it has a complex camouflage pattern that ranges from green to white to purple. It's found in Asia, Africa, and the Hawaiian Islands, where it was introduced to pollinate some endangered flowers.

The lo moth (*Automeris io*) is a colorful species that can be found across much of Canada and the United States. It has large, dramatic eyespots with white speckles that almost appear to reflect light. While the males are primarily yellow, female moths have red forewings and smaller antennae. In its caterpillar form, it is bright green and

#GARDENIA

covered with venomous spines that release toxins when touched.

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The galium sphinx moth (*Hyles gallii*) is another impressive flier, with strong, striped wings that can span over 3 inches. Its range includes the Northern United States and Canada, and it can even survive as far north as the Arctic Circle. It's named after the Galium family of plants, which it feeds on as a caterpillar. Sphinx moths, also known as hawk-moths, are unusually active during the daytime, when they feed on the nectar of flowers.

The rosy maple moth (*Dryocampa rubicunda*) is one of the smallest of the great silk moths, a family of moths with more than 2,300 member species. It's distinguished by its bright coloration, with a stout yellow body, pink legs, and pink- and yellow-striped wings. And obviously, the rosy maple moth gets bonus points for that face! This fuzzy creature feeds on maple leaves in its caterpillar form. In fact, large

groups of caterpillars can easily render a tree bare, though this does not harm the host tree. Like other great silk moths, it only survives from a few days up to two weeks as an adult and lacks the mouth parts necessary to eat.

The false tiger moth (*Dysphania militaris*) is one of the moth species most commonly mistaken for a butterfly, perhaps due to its bright coloration, which is reminiscent of some swallowtail butterflies. Despite its bright colors, it shares the characteristics that separate moths from butterflies, including feathery antennae, a thicker abdomen, and larger scales on its wings. It is found in Southeast Asia, and has a wingspan of about 3.5 inches.

The cecropia moth (*Hyalophora cecropia*) is North America's largest moth, with a wingspan that can reach 7 inches. Like other giant silk moths, it can't eat and survives as an adult moth for only two weeks. The population is susceptible to pest issues. A parasitoid called the tachinid fly was introduced to combat exotic gypsy moths, but has been so effective that it is affecting native moth populations as well.

Like the comet moth, the Madagascar sunset moth (*Chrysiridia rhipheus*) is a colorful specimen that is endemic to Madagascar. It is not, however, as large as the comet moth, with a

wingspan of only 3 inches. Its hindwings sport a multitude of hues as well as several distinctive tails. Collectors are so enamored by its beautiful appearance that it is now bred in captivity for the international butterfly trade.

The giant leopard moth (*Hypercompe scribonia*) is found across North and Central America, from southern Canada to Panama. It has a distinctive color pattern, with white wings with black spots, some of which are solid and others ringed. When its wings are spread, its colorful abdomen, with shiny blue and orange spots, becomes visible. It's generally hard to spot, thanks to its nocturnal nature.

Rothschildia aurota is another giant silk moth species, and one of the largest to be found in South America, with a wingspan of 6-7 inches. It is one of many similar species on the continent, which might explain the lack of a common name. Thanks to its wingspan and coloration, it's also a popular species with hobbyist breeders and is known for being easy to raise in captivity.

The emperor moth (*Saturnia pavonia*) is a large, brown species found across Europe. It's the only member of the Saturniidae family, which includes most of the largest, most beautiful moths, that lives in the British Isles. Its mostly brown appearance is set off by a black and

orange eyespot on each of its four wings. Males will fly during the day and are much more active than females, which prefer to lie low in the vegetation during daylight hours.

The white-lined sphinx moth (*Hyles lineata*) is another hawk-moth known for its flying prowess reminiscent of hummingbirds. Its most striking feature is the white lines referenced in its name, which are solid and others ringed. It's found across most of North and Central America, where it feeds on a wide variety of plants and flowers. In its caterpillar form, it's known to gather in large groups that can defoliate trees and shrubs.

The luna moth (*Actias luna*) is one of the largest moth species found in North America. While it's not endangered, it can be hard to spot in the wild, due to its weeklong lifespan. It's distinguished by its white body and large, pale green wings with long tails. As a caterpillar, the luna moth is one of several species that will deter predators by producing a clicking sound and regurgitating a foul liquid.

A female Hercules moth (*Coscinocera hercules*) earned the distinction as the world's largest moth, with the largest recorded wing surface area of any insect and a wingspan of 11 inches. It's native to northern Australia and New Guinea. These giant specimens haven't evolved by accident. Studies show that large wings with long tails can help moths escape from bats by drawing attention away from vital body parts and disrupting sonar.

The coffee clearwing (*Cephonodes hylas*), also known as the coffee bee hawk-moth or pellucid hawk-moth, is widely found across Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Australia. It's unique for its transparent, black-lined wings, and its multicolored body, which ranges from yellow to brown to green. As a caterpillar, it feeds on gardenia and coffee plants and features a horn on its rear end, a common characteristic of hawk-moth larvae.

The elephant hawk-moth (*Deilephila elpenor*) is distributed across Europe and Asia, but is most commonly found in the United Kingdom. Unlike most pollinating moths, which feed during the day, it remains nocturnal and has developed excellent night vision. It can even detect a flower's color with only moonlight as a guide. It has evolved to have eyespots in both its caterpillar and adult forms. As a caterpillar, it will strike a defensive pose, widening its body and emphasizing the spots to deter predators.

The Japanese silk moth (*Antheraea yamanata*) is known for producing rare and expensive tussar silk, but it's an arresting species due to its appearance as well. It has large, fernlike antennae and tan-colored wings that can grow up to 6 inches wide. It's native to Japan, but after more than 1,000 years of cultivation for its silk, it has been imported across Asia and Europe, where the species escaped containment and now also lives in the wild.

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#AROUND TOWN

Art You Must See

Marking the 17th anniversary of ICA Gallery, the exhibition provided a breathtaking journey through the evolution, diversity, and brilliance of modern Indian artistry

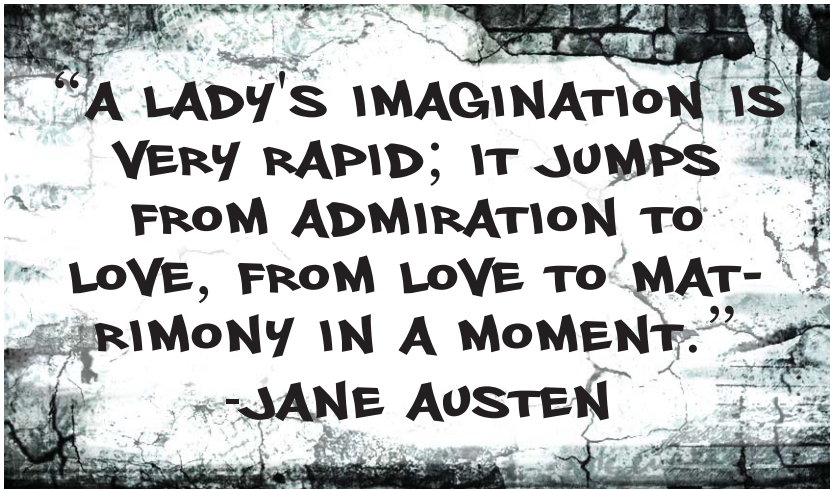


paintings as old as 1930, meticulously restored or collected over decades. Each artwork reflected mastery, vision, and spirit, making 'Virtuosity' a once-in-a-lifetime royal celebration of modern Indian art, unparalleled in Rajasthan's cultural history.

'Virtuosity' was not merely a display of artworks; it stood as a grand tribute to 17 years of ICA Gallery's journey in championing Indian modern art, offering a rare opportunity to witness the depth and breadth of India's artistic heritage in a single space. The exhibition celebrated the dialogue between generations of artists and audiences, honoring the enduring brilliance of Indian modernism and creating a historic landmark in the country's cultural landscape.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman