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Insects That Visit Starbucks In San Marcos

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These insects were discovered within 25 meters of the Starbucks Coffee Shop across from CSUSM in San Marcos, California. This popular site is frequently visited by students and faculty of CSUSM. It also tends to form aggregations of native and naturalized residents of the San Marcos community. Although *Homo sapiens* ssp. *sapiens* is attracted to this site for roasted beans of *Coffea arabicus*, there appears to be no correlation between any of the following arthropod species and coffee.

Ceanothus Silk Moth (Family Saturniidae)

The ceanothus silk moth was observed visiting Starbucks across the street from CSUSM on 7 February 2007. It appeared to be a male with his robust antennae. As a biologist, I felt compelled to photograph this lovely insect and write a brief synopsis about it. Its scientific binomial is ***Hyalophora euryalus*** and it belongs to the wild silk moth family Saturniidae. This family includes some of the largest and most spectacular moths in the world, particularly the tropical rain forest. The valuable textile silk comes from the larvae of a different moth family, the Bombycidae (see link below). The ceanothus silk moth lives in the nearby chaparral-covered hillsides above CSUSM. The larva (caterpillar) feeds primarily on species of California lilac (**Ceanothus**). Two species are native to the nearby hills, coast blue lilac (***C. tomentosus*** ssp. ***olivaceus***) and coast white lilac (***C. verrucosus***). Both of these species grow at nearby Jack's Pond Park located on La Moree Road east of CSUSM. The larvae are also known to feed on other native shrubs, including laurel sumac (***Malosma laurina***), mountain mahogany (***Cercocarpus minutiflorus***) and manzanita (***Arctostaphylos***) species. At maturity in the fall they grow to a length of up to four inches (10 cm) and resemble fat, light green sausages with stubby legs. The back (dorsal) side is decorated with yellowish or reddish projections (tubercles). After feeding all summer, the larva spins a flask-shaped, silken cocoon that hangs from the host shrub.



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Lateral and dorsal views of an adult ceanothus silk moth (***Hyalophora euryalus***).

[Silk Moth Larvae In Thailand
Plants Of Nearby Jack's Pond](#)

Branch Boring Beetle (Family Bostrichidae)

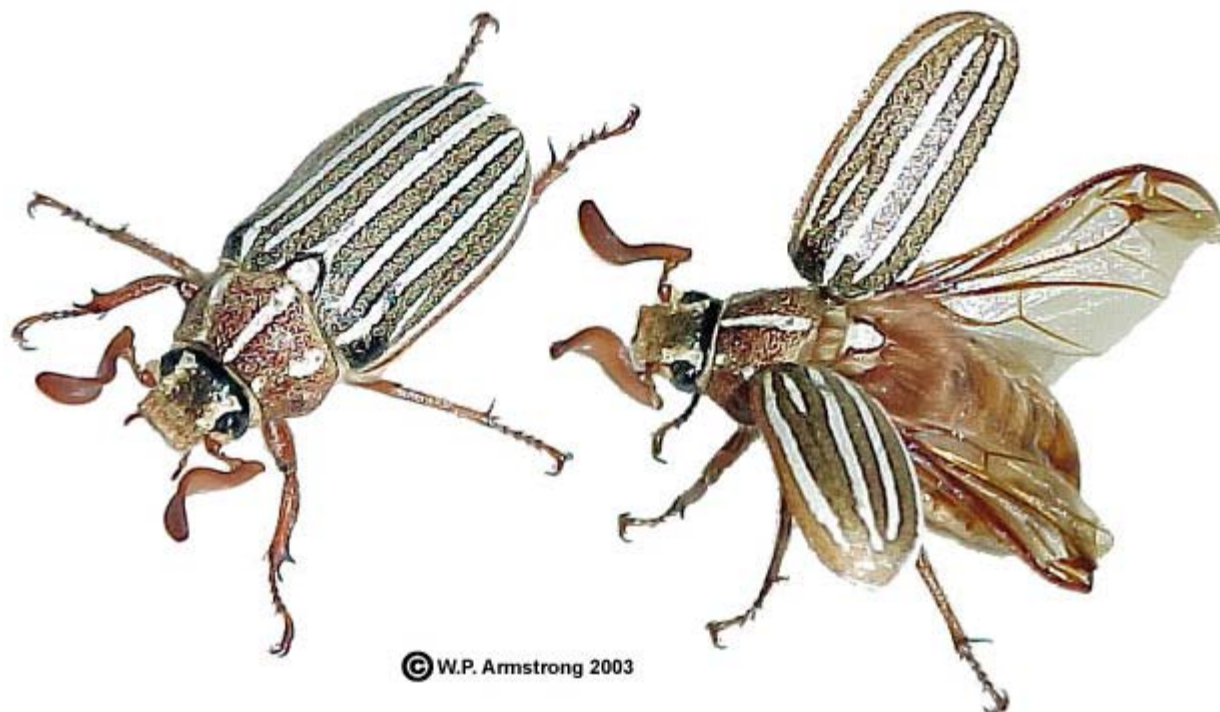
One of the most remarkable and destructive families of beetles includes members of the family Bostrichidae. Adult short circuit beetles (**Scobicia declivis**) bore into lead sheathing of telephone cables causing short circuiting when moisture enters the small holes. Trunks of native California fan palms in the southwestern U.S. often contain large circular tunnels, the work of huge boring larvae (**Dinapate wrightii**). The hardwood floor beneath a palm trunk section at the San Diego Museum of Natural History was deeply grooved by one of these larvae. The adult beetle is truly bizarre. In the late 1800's museums paid up to \$1,000 to an enterprising collector for one of these striking beetles. The collector (probably a business major) reportedly inflated the value of his merchandise by keeping their exact location a secret.



Stout's hardwood borer (**Polycaon stouti**). This beetle has very destructive larvae, particularly if you have wood construction in your home made of oak and maple. The larvae of this beetle can even bore into furniture!

[See The Amazing Palm-Boring Beetle](#)

Ten-Lined June Beetle (Family Scarabaeidae)



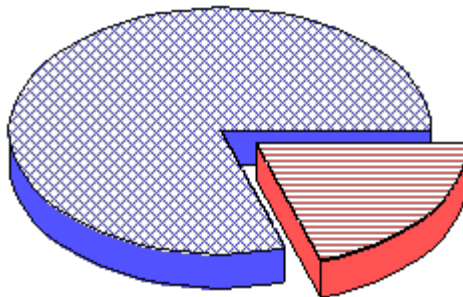
An adult ten-lined June beetle (***Polyphylla decemlineata***).

This is a large beetle with conspicuous white stripes on its wing covers (elytra). When taking off, the elytra move forward and a pair of larger, membranous flight wings unfold. The beetle is attracted to lights at night during the summer evenings in southern California. When handled it makes an unusual squeaking sound. Adult beetles feed at night on needles of coniferous trees.

Fig Beetle (Family Scarabaeidae)



The fig beetle (***Cotinus texana***) is very fond of ripe figs and other juicy fruits. This harmless beetle visits Starbucks during the summer months. Some terrified coffee drinkers think it is a bumblebee! It is not surprising that most insect visitors to Starbucks are beetles, especially when you consider that one fifth of all the 1.5 million species of living creatures on Earth are beetles.



If all the 1.5 million species of plants and animals are shown as a giant pizza, the incredibly diverse beetles make the biggest slice.

[See The Wayne's Word Beetle Page](#)

Long-Horned Beetle (Family Cerambycidae)



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Phoracantha recurva, a long-horned wood-boring beetle introduced into southern California from Australia. According to A. V. Evans and J. N. Hogue (Field Guide to Beetles of California, 2006), it was first discovered at the University of California at Riverside in 1995. Another closely related species (**P. semipunctata**) was found in 1984 on dying eucalyptus trees in Orange County. The larvae of both species tunnel between the bark and wood, but construct their pupal chambers in the heartwood. Adult beetles are attracted to fallen branches and injured or water-stressed trees.



California prionus (**Prionus californicus**). The large larva feeds on roots of deciduous trees. It is similar to the pine sawyer beetle (**Ergates spiculatus**) in the following links. Why this beetle came to Starbucks is a mystery at this time.

[Go To Wayne's Word Beetle Part 1](#)
[Go To Wayne's Word Beetle Part 2](#)
[Another Wayne's Word Beetle Page](#)

Valley Carpenter Bee (Family Anthophoridae)



A female worker carpenter bee (*Xylocopa varipuncta*). Carpenter bees bore into wood and make tunnel-like nests. They inhabit a variety of wood objects, including fence posts, building timbers and telephone poles. This species exhibits sexual dimorphism because the males are golden-brown and very different in appearance. Why this bee occasionally hovers over tables at Starbucks is unknown at this time, perhaps it is checking out the wood.

Miscellaneous Arthropods At Starbucks

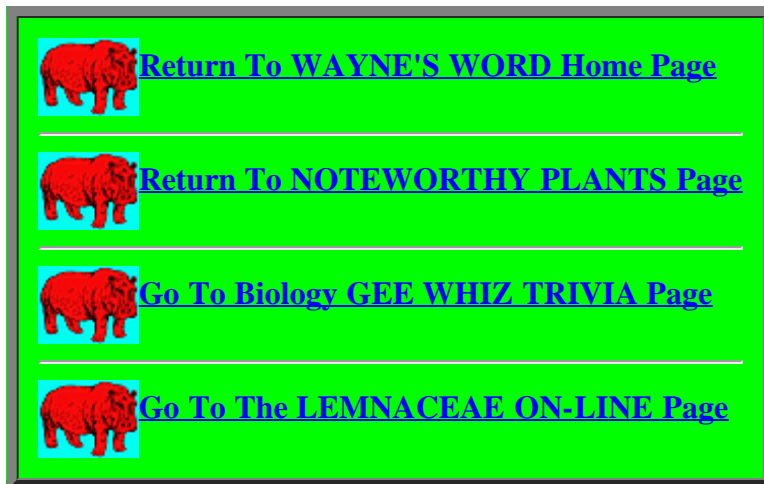


A tiny spider resembling an ant that was running across my table at Starbucks. Image taken with hand-held Sony T-10 on a light box using two 2000 lumen

fluorescent lamps. Note the size comparison with U.S. penny.

This brochure available at:

<http://waynesword.palomar.edu/starbucks1.pdf>



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