

## Tasar silkworm

Tasar silkworm belongs to the family **Saturniidae**. It is derived from the sanskrit word "Trasara". Several species of *Antheraea* are exploited for production of wild silk known as the silk; these are ***A. mylitta*, *A. pernyi*, *A. yamamai*, *A. paphia* and *A. royeli***.

***Antheraea.mylitta* and *A. paphia*** are reared in the Central and Eastern part of India. Many regional strains known by different local names are also found. Types of voltinism namely univoltine, bivoltine and multivoltine are found in *A.mylitta* and *A. paphia*. These are reared on trees of ***Terminalia tomentosa*(Vern. Asan), *Terminalia arjun*(Vern.. Arjun), *Shorea robusta* (Vern. Saal)**. Rearing of *A. pernyi* and *A. royeli* has been introduced recently in Manipur. These are reared on Quercus or Oak. *A. pernyi* and *A. yamamai* are the tasar silkworms of China and Japan respectively. These species feed on Quercus or Oak trees and are normally bivoltine. **The oak tasar is finer than the common tasar.**

The tasar moths are fairly large insects. Females are larger and yellowish brown in colour, while males are smaller and brick red in colour. Both have prominent and colourful eye spots on their wings. The antennae of males are bushy and the abdomen is narrower in comparison to females.

Tasar silk accounts for 2% of total non-mulberry silk production in India. By reeling and spinning, yarn can be produced from the cocoons. Tasar filaments show the greatest length among the non-mulberry silks. The spun yarn is generally coarse with a denier of 270-280, while the reeled yarn is fine and thin with a denier value of 80-100. Tasar silk is unlikely to get damaged by relatively higher temperatures. It has low moisture content and also loses less moisture. This property increases its strength compared to mulberry fibres. Tasar silk is cheaper than mulberry silk and can be used for various applications like drug delivery and making electronic appliances and sensors apart from clothes.