

## MAKING SOMETHING MORE ALLURING!

As the boredom of a second year of lockdown started in 2021, I decided I'd liven things up by having a go at using pheromones to attract some moths. I looked at the Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies (ALS) website which had a selection of pheromones and traps on sale, and also some advice on trapping. I'd never seen any Clearwings, so I bought a number of lures for those and also some lures for micros. I was particularly interested to see whether I could trap *Pammene suspectana* as a number of people had caught them in pheromone traps in 2020 some distance away from what was thought to be their usual range.

What could be easier! You buy a lure for a moth, the moth comes to the trap and you quickly check the ID. Unfortunately it's a little more complicated than that. Firstly, the lures don't just attract the target moth (for example, the lure for Large Red-belted Clearwing also attracts Red-belted Clearwing) and many of the micros caught need to be dissected to establish their ID (eg *P.suspectana*). ALS has a spreadsheet of non-intended target species attracted to their lures which is helpful but not comprehensive (I've had a number not on their list).

I then looked at the DMG website and elsewhere for flight periods and decided I'd start in July (this was too late for Yellow-legged Clearwing which I finally caught in May this year). Each year is different, and by looking at the Moth Pheromone Trap Records Facebook page you can see what people are catching. If you look at the DMG website you'd think that some of the Clearwings and micros are very rare, but, as many of them don't come to light at night and little pheromone trapping is going on, I think they are just under-recorded.

Having festooned my garden with traps, the fun begun! It's amazing how quickly some Clearwings come to a trap. Currant, Orange-tailed and Red-tipped Clearwing were common; Lunar Hornet and Six belted were less frequent and there was just the one Large Red-belted. I failed to trap any Yellow-legged, Red-belted or Sallow despite putting traps out. I only found out

later that Sallow only fly in even years so I'm trying again this year! It's very important to watch the traps closely to ensure that the Clearwings don't get overheated, and only to trap for short periods as the trapping interferes with their normal mating. ID is fairly straight forward except for Large Red-belted and Red-belted. ALS has a note on how to separate this pair; it's important to note the colour of the palps (orange in Large Red-belted and white in male Red-belted - of course you're unlikely to attract females).

Micros don't usually give the same immediate buzz as a Clearwing, particularly the beautiful Lunar Hornet. I did trap a number of the pretty *P. aurana* and *Nemapogon koenigi* (*wolffiella*) in traps intended for other micros. I was also able to ID *Psychoides filicivora* (having seen it before) but more exciting was *P. verhuella* which doesn't seem to come to light (very similar to *filicivora* but with no white spot on the tornus). *Bucculatrix thoracella* and *Mompha divisella* were also new and within my powers to ID. But the LBJs (as they're called in the birding world - little brown jobs) proved much more challenging for me. They look very similar and need dissecting: *Grapholita lobarzewski*, *G. funebrana*, *G. janthina*, *Pammene giganteana* and *P. albuginana*. And was there a *P. suspectana* amongst them all? There was! Four in total - the first ones for Dorset. But none of them were caught on the lure for *P. suspectana*: two on lures for *G. funebrana* and two on lures for *G. molesta*.

Julian Francis