



# Bug-gazing

## How to see bugs in the night?

Humans are not particularly well adapted to seeing in the dark, which is why we use so much artificial light. So how can we find out what bugs are active at night?

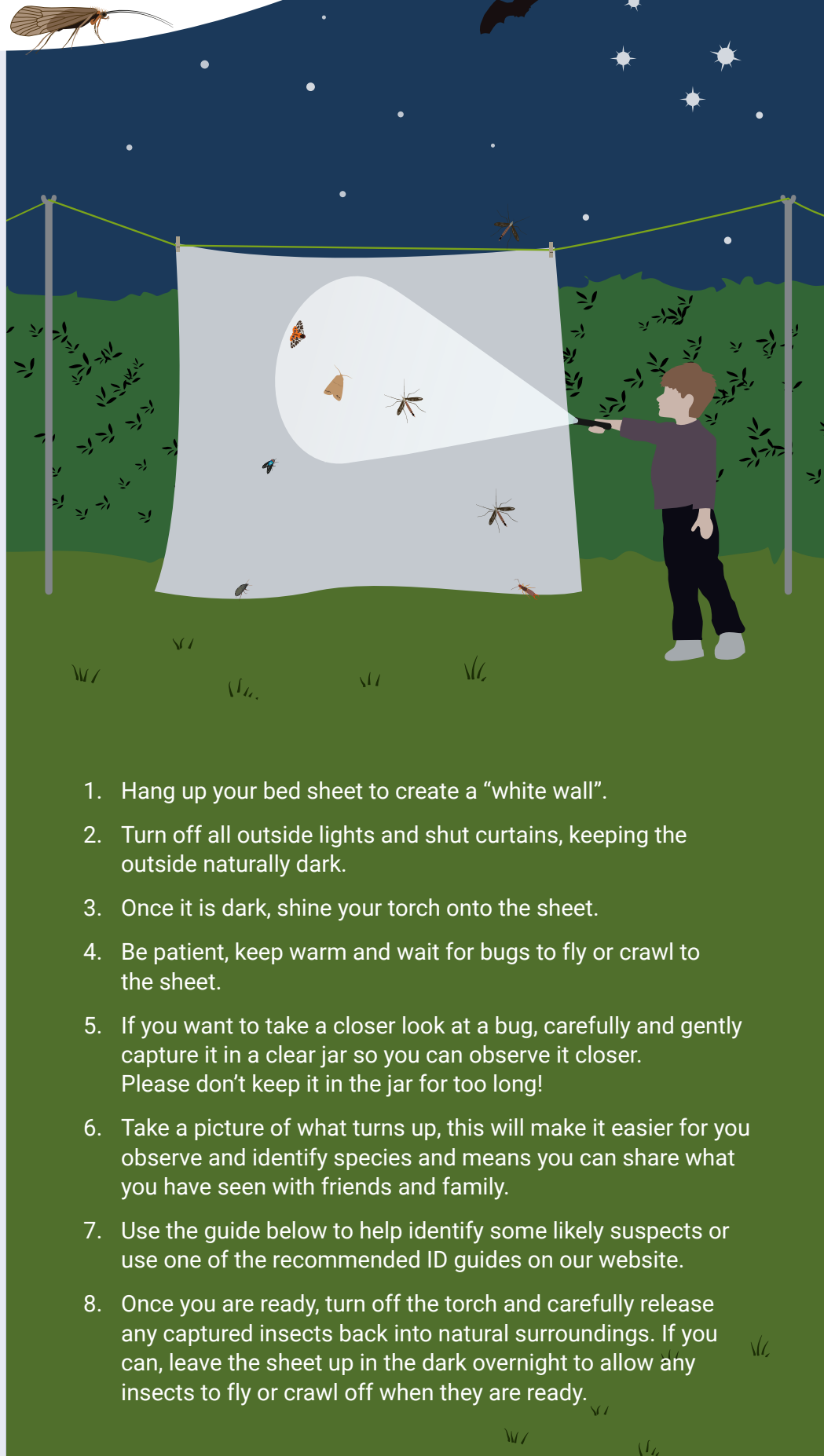
The easiest way is to go outside with a torch and have a search for what's crawling around on the ground or up a tree. But if you want a better view why not create a bug-gazing light sheet.

## Make your own light sheet

Creating your own bug-gazing light sheet to help spot some of the nocturnal bugs in your garden is simple and requires only a few items you probably already have in your house.

### You will need:

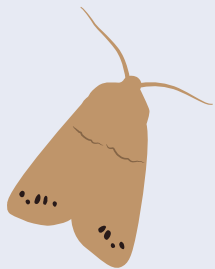
- A white bed sheet.  
(One that you don't mind getting muddy).
- A torch.
- Something to hold up your sheet or have it drape over – such as a washing line or fence.
- A clear clean jar with a lid.



1. Hang up your bed sheet to create a "white wall".
2. Turn off all outside lights and shut curtains, keeping the outside naturally dark.
3. Once it is dark, shine your torch onto the sheet.
4. Be patient, keep warm and wait for bugs to fly or crawl to the sheet.
5. If you want to take a closer look at a bug, carefully and gently capture it in a clear jar so you can observe it closer. Please don't keep it in the jar for too long!
6. Take a picture of what turns up, this will make it easier for you observe and identify species and means you can share what you have seen with friends and family.
7. Use the guide below to help identify some likely suspects or use one of the recommended ID guides on our website.
8. Once you are ready, turn off the torch and carefully release any captured insects back into natural surroundings. If you can, leave the sheet up in the dark overnight to allow any insects to fly or crawl off when they are ready.

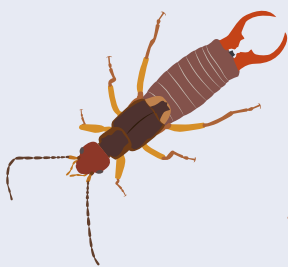
# Likely Suspects

## GUIDE



moths

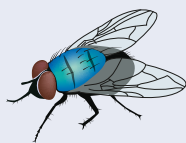
earwigs



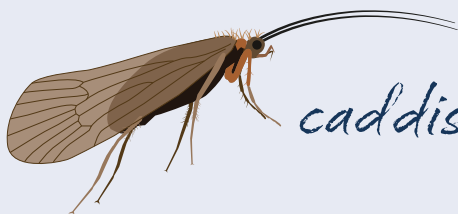
beetles



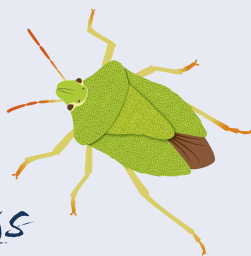
crane flies



flies



caddisflies



true bugs

Sometimes daytime species will be attracted by artificial lights at night and might turn up on your light sheet.

## Top tips for Bug-Gazing

Limit how long you have the light on and don't repeat the light sheet night after night.

Choose a warm, still night, preferably when there is a new moon, or it is obscured by cloud.

Set up your light sheet in a spot as dark as possible away from other sources of light.

Share images of what you find with, friends, family and Buglife.

Don't be too disappointed if nothing shows up, bugs are busy creatures and will hopefully be off working their night shift. Bugs are declining at a rapid rate and are not as common as they once were. To help support nocturnal bugs why not check out our "In the Night Garden" page.

If you want to learn more about nocturnal bugs we would recommend borrowing or buying a field guide. You can find some recommended guides on our website: [buglife.org.uk/campaigns/light-pollution](http://buglife.org.uk/campaigns/light-pollution)

[buglife.org.uk](http://buglife.org.uk) | [info@buglife.org.uk](mailto:info@buglife.org.uk)



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