

Gillespie Creek Journal

This is the one and only Summer 2022 Solstice week!

Nature's spectacular action scenes are capturing our attention both day and night. All creatures are at their peak of activity and splendor; this includes in the insect world.

Fireflies we see late at night and in their immature female Glow-Worm stage are actually varieties of Beetles!

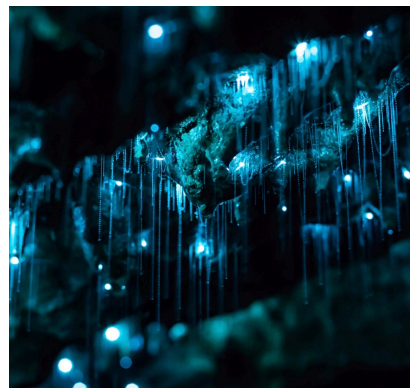
Fireflies (also called Lightning Bugs) are the same thing, a species of beetles that communicate through bioluminescent flashes.

Research tells me that the light of the firefly is a chemical reaction caused by an organic compound- luciferin. As air rushes into a firefly's abdomen, it reacts with the luciferin. This causes a chemical reaction that gives off the firefly's glow (cold light.). 2000 different Firefly species exist.



Fireflies at Night

Photo by National Geographic



Glow-Worms

Photo by National Geographic

Firefly Tourism is popular world wide. The Congaree National Park, South Carolina offers "A Synchronous Firefly Viewing Event" in May of each year. Very popular, one must enter a lottery with specific entry times to apply for attendance. Only 120 vehicles are admitted during the 6 day night period of annual Firefly mating activity. Google the park for more specific information.

Firefly Puns

What did one firefly say to another?
 "You glow girl!"
 Why did the firefly fail his test?
 "He wasn't very bright"
 Fireflies are able to generate a bright light to attract mates...
 "They have "hi" beams"

Where and when to find Fireflies?

They are the most active during the months of May through July. Fireflies need tall grasses and water, especially flowing streams to feed, lay their eggs and go through their complex metamorphosis. Fireflies light up for romance. A male will send light signals hoping for a female reply. If a female waiting in the grass or bushes likes what she sees, she responds back with a flash of her own. They continue to engage in this twinkling "conversation" until the male locates her and they finally mate. Each species has its own pattern- a code that lets individuals identify appropriate mate of the same species.

Fireflies spend most of their life in the larval stage. Females can stay in this "glow-worm" stage for as long as two years... Tonight's fireflies may have been 2020's larvae. It is said that Firefly eggs also glow.

Fireflies are endangered by bright night lighting (commercial building and highways) and mowing along ditches and waterways.

What do Fireflies and Glow-worms eat? They ferociously feast on snails and insect larvae.

What's more fun than helping a child catch a firefly? Maybe telling jokes about them!