

PublisherInfo		
PublisherName	:	BioMed Central
PublisherLocation	:	London
PublisherImprintName	:	BioMed Central

Moth mating

ArticleInfo		
ArticleID	:	4622
ArticleDOI	:	10.1186/gb-spotlight-20021028-02
ArticleCitationID	:	spotlight-20021028-02
ArticleSequenceNumber	:	288
ArticleCategory	:	Research news
ArticleFirstPage	:	1
ArticleLastPage	:	2
ArticleHistory	:	RegistrationDate : 2002-10-28 OnlineDate : 2002-10-28
ArticleCopyright	:	BioMed Central Ltd2002
ArticleGrants	:	
ArticleContext	:	130593311

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Female arctid **moths** (*Utetheisa ornatrix*) prefer to mate with large males. There is evidence that the female benefits both phenotypically and genetically. In the October 24 **Nature**, Sabeti *et al.* describe their analysis of the genetic basis for female mate preference (*Nature* 2002, **419**:830-832). They calculated a 'mating preference index' (MPI) for female moths and found that mating preferences of daughters were primarily inherited from the father. There is also a correlation between female MPIs and their father's body size - daughters with large fathers have a stronger preference for larger males. *Utetheisa* males are homogametic (ZZ) and females are heterogametic (ZW), so the genes involved in mating preference can be assigned to the Z chromosome. The authors speculate that Z-linkage of female preference may be a general feature in the Lepidoptera.

References

1. Female choice increases offspring fitness in an arctiid moth (*Utetheisa ornatrix*).
2. *Nature*, [<http://www.nature.com>]