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EVOLUTION AND DIVERSITY OF TROPHIC PREFERENCES OF ADULT BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS

Summary

The review is focused on evolution and diversity of lepidopteran trophic preferences. The evolutionary history of Lepidoptera is presented with emphasis on adaptations associated with foraging behavior of adult butterflies and moths, including the evolutionary modifications of the proboscis. Problems of nutrient supply in lepidopteran diet are also analysed. The most important components of butterflies and moths food are carbohydrates and amino acids obtained mostly from nectar and fruits, but also from pollen, sap, honeydew or honey. There are also specialized groups of hematophagous or lacrymophagous Lepidoptera. Water and minerals supply from feeding on puddles, moist soil, marine water, urine, dung or carrion, is also analyzed as an element of diet.

Key words: diet, evolution of feeding strategies, pharmacophagy, hemetophagy, Lepidoptera