

## The View from the Vicarage

### Killer lights

Did you know streetlights can kill? I don't mean humans, but insects. There is an insect apocalypse going on just now. Most of us know about the bees. But it's not just bees. Almost every insect species on the planet is being decimated. There are a number of causes for this. Intensive farming and the use of pesticides, habitat loss, and climate change and global warming are amongst the biggest. But did you know that artificial light is a major killer of insects?

Almost half the world's insect species are nocturnal. We all know that moths and other flying insects are drawn to outdoor lights. Around a third of the bugs you see flying around your outside light will die by the morning, either from predators or exhaustion. Artificial light confuses insects and prevents them from mating, makes them lay their eggs in the wrong place, draws them in to car headlights to get splatted on windscreens, and interferes with the way they hunt at night.

So what, you might say. Who likes bugs anyway? I happen to believe in a God who created us to tend and care for and look after the rest of creation. But even if you don't believe like me, we should care out of a sense of self-preservation. We need insects. Without them we will not survive as a species. Insects cycle nutrients, they pollinate plants, disperse seeds, maintain soil structure and fertility, control populations of other organisms, and provide a major food source for other higher organisms, birds, animals, humans. They are nature's cleaners. They recycle all the rubbish.

So if you don't need lights on, turn them off; have motion sensitive lights that only come on when you need them; fit orange rather than white bulbs. And make a bug hotel at the bottom of your garden. Try counting the number of different insect species you can spot. And then see if you can increase this over time. We need the insects, and just now they need us too.

With best wishes

Rev Dave Rogers