

Bella Moth



Utetheisa ornatrix



Biology

The **Bella Moth** is a colorful moth distributed throughout North and South America. Adults are approximately 1.5 inches in wingspan. They lay clusters of eggs on rattlepod plants (*Crotalaria* spp.), from which larvae derive alkaloids. The alkaloids serve as chemical protection from predators such as bats, and also are used as precursors of pheromones. Larvae emerge from eggs in four days. Initially larvae feed on the leaves of the host plant, and at later stages, they feed on the seeds, which contain more alkaloids. In northern regions, the **Bella Moth** undergoes two reproductive cycles, whereas in the south, it can reproduce continuously throughout the year.



Host Plants

Rattlepod

Crotalaria spp.

Fun Fact: Bella Moth adults release a defensive substance when disturbed (→). This substance is made up mainly with alkaloids (see text).



For more information scan the QR code or visit <http://natl.ifas.ufl.edu/index.php>