

BUSH DETECTIVE



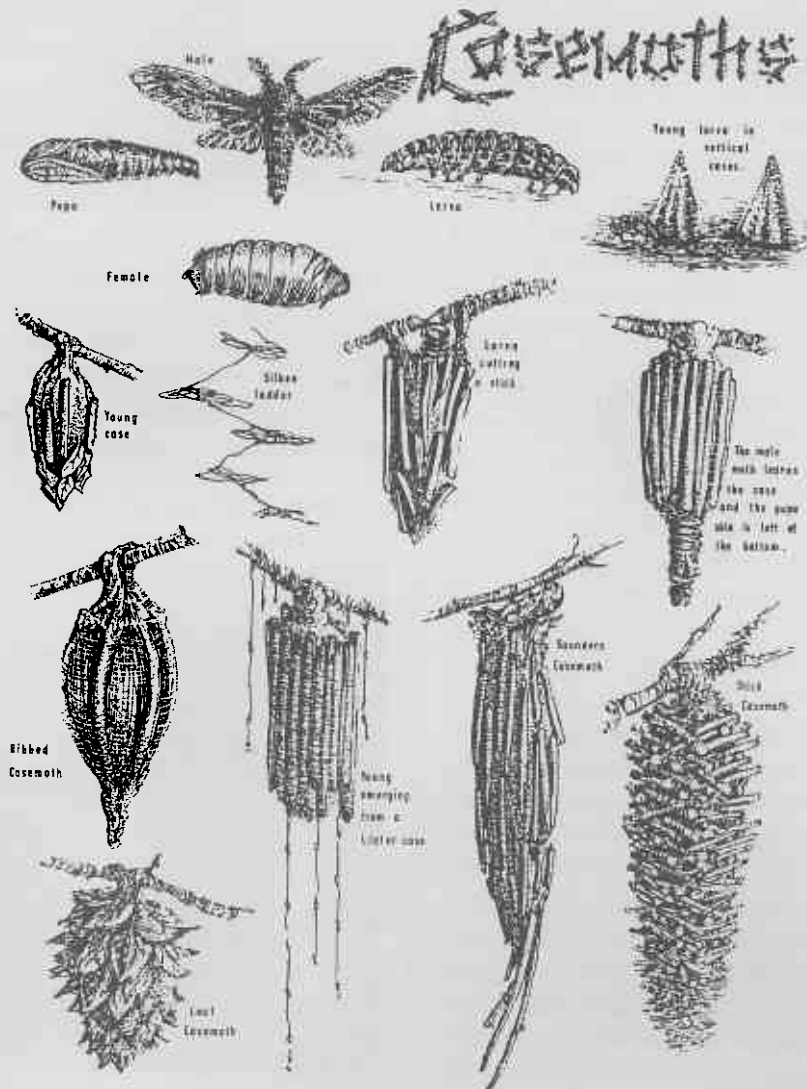
WHO LIVES IN A HOUSE OF STICKS?

No, it's not one of the Three Little Pigs! It's a case moth larvae.

Case moths belong to the family Psychidae, which has some 350 species. In most of these species, the caterpillar lives inside a mobile case made of an assortment of silk, leaves and twigs. Due to the different styles of design, the case alone can be used to identify which species a particular caterpillar belongs to.

An interesting point to note here is that only the males will become flying moths as adults, as the mature females generally do not form wings, and will remain in the cases to breed.

Below are some of the various designs of cases formed by the case moth caterpillars. The stick case moth is a species endemic only to the southwest of Australia, and is often found in bush remnants on the outskirts of Perth.



Drawings courtesy of the Education Department