

SERICULTURE AND IT'S COMPONENTS

Commercial rearing of silk producing silkworm is called sericulture. It is an agro based industry comprising three main components: i) cultivation of food plants of the worms, ii) rearing of silk worms, and iii) reeling and spinning of silk. The first two are agricultural and the last one is an industrial component. There are four varieties of silkworms in India, accordingly sericulture is classified into **Mulberry Culture, Tasar Culture, Muga Culture** and **Eri Culture**.

Taxonomy of silk worms

Silk producing insects are commonly referred to as **serigenous insects**. Silkworm is a common name for the silk-producing caterpillar larvae of silk moths. Silk moths belong to Phylum - Artropoda, Class - Insecta, Order - Lepidoptera, Super family - Bombycoidea. Bombycoidea comprises eight families of which only Bombycidae and Saturnidae are the two important families the members of which produce natural silk. There are several species of silkworm that are used in commercial silk production .These are:

1. Mulberry Silk worm

- *Bombyx mori* (Bombycidae)
- *Bombyx mandarina* (Bombycidae)



2. Tassar Silk worm

- *Antheraea mylitta* (Saturnidae)
- *Antheraea pernyi* (Saturnidae)
- *Antheraea yamamai* (Saturnidae)
- *Antheraea paphia* (Saturnidae)
- *Antheraea royeli*(Saturnidae)



3. Muga Silkworm

Antheraea assama (Saturnidae)



4. Eri silk worm

Philosamia ricini (Saturnidae)

