Silkworms have been bred over thousands of years to behave quite unlike their caterpillar cousins in the wild. That’s because people purposely breed silkworms to fit this job description:

WANTED–Superlative silk producers. Benefits include housing, unlimited food and protection from all predators. Wanderlust greatly discouraged. No opportunity for travel.

Obviously, what makes a good silk producer in captivity is very different from what helps a caterpillar survive in the wild. Commercial silkworms are dynamos at silk production, and compared to their wild relatives, rather sluggish about everything else.

Outdoors, you’ve probably seen caterpillars crawling to find food or hide from birds, but commercial silkworm caterpillars hardly move. For silk production, they’re kept on open trays because they’re content to stay put, as long as they have a steady supply of mulberry leaves. Even when they reach the moth stage, commercial silkworms are surprisingly immobile. Wild moths fly to evade predators and to lay their eggs in different areas. However, commercial silkworm moths haven’t needed to do these things for thousands of years. They’ve completely lost the ability to fly, even though they still have wings!

Here’s another difference. In the wild, moths are often very particular about where they’ll lay eggs. This ensures that baby caterpillars can chomp their favorite leaves as soon as they hatch. Commercial silkworm moths have lost that instinct too. They’ll even lay eggs on a sheet of paper, where it’s easy for humans to keep track of them.

数千年来，蚕已经培育出来，与野外的毛虫表兄弟不同。那是因为人们故意养蚕以适应这份工作描述：

想要 - 最高级的丝绸生产商。好处包括住房，无限的食物和所有捕食者的保护。流浪癖大为沮丧。没有旅行的机会。

显然，使一个好的丝绸生产者被圈养的原因与帮助毛虫在野外生存的东西大不相同。商业蚕是丝绸生产的发电机，与野生亲戚相比，对其他一切都相当迟钝。

在户外，你可能已经看到毛毛虫爬行寻找食物或躲避鸟类，但商业蚕毛虫很难移动。对于丝绸生产，只要他们有稳定的桑叶供应，他们就会保持在开放的托盘上，因为他们满足于留下来。即使它们到达蛾期，商业蚕也会出乎意料地不动。野生飞蛾飞行逃避捕食者并在不同地区产卵。然而，商业蚕蛾几千年来不需要做这些事情。他们完全失去了飞行的能力，即使他们还有翅膀！

这是另一个不同之处。在野外，飞蛾通常非常特别关注它们会产卵的地方。这可以确保婴儿毛虫孵化后可以立即咀嚼自己喜欢的叶子。商业蚕蛾也失去了这种本能。他们甚至会在一张纸上放鸡蛋，人们很容易跟踪它们。