

Protocols for Collecting Insect Specimens

Prepared by Kristen Drew, 2016

Collection Supplies:

- Net
- Jars with lids that screw on
- Plastic “Ziploc” bags
- Glassine envelopes
- Notebook
- Pen
- A bag to carry supplies
- Identification badge. It is important to wear an ID badge while collecting so guests and other employees can identify you as a member of the research department.



Acceptable jars with screw on lids to store insects in. Jars used must have lids that screw on to prevent specimen desiccation while in freezer.

1. Collection

- Once outside, the net is the most useful tool for collecting insects. **Be careful not to damage the plants or hit any guests.**
- After the insect has been caught in the net, it works best to grab a handful of the net, trapping the insect toward the bottom. Very carefully, as to not let the insect escape, slide a jar into the net, capture the insect, and screw on the lid. (Occasionally, it can be easier to trap an insect in a jar or just grab it with your hands.)
- When catching butterflies, moths, or skippers (Lepidopterans), instead of placing the insect in a jar, a glassine envelope will be used so the wings do not get damaged. The glassine envelope is then placed in a plastic “Ziploc” bag.



Storage example of Lepidoptera in glassine envelope and plastic “Ziploc” bag.

2. Record Keeping

Upon collecting an insect it is important to record in a notebook the following information

- Collector number
- Garden where insect was collected
- Date
- Type of insect or distinguishing characteristic
- Host plant. If host plant is unknown, take a photograph to help identify later.
- Any notes regarding what the insect was doing (i.e. “On the wing”, “Visiting blossoms”, “chewing leaves”, etc.)

3. After Collection

- Transfer the information recorded in the notebook to a tag for each insect. Place each tag in the associated insects’ jar or plastic “Ziploc” bag.
- Place specimens in box labeled “DBGA Specimens” inside the small freezer in the lab and keep frozen for a minimum of 4 days.

Date
Collector
Collector Numbers
Garden
Host Plant

Tag to be filled out and place in jar or plastic “Ziploc” bag.