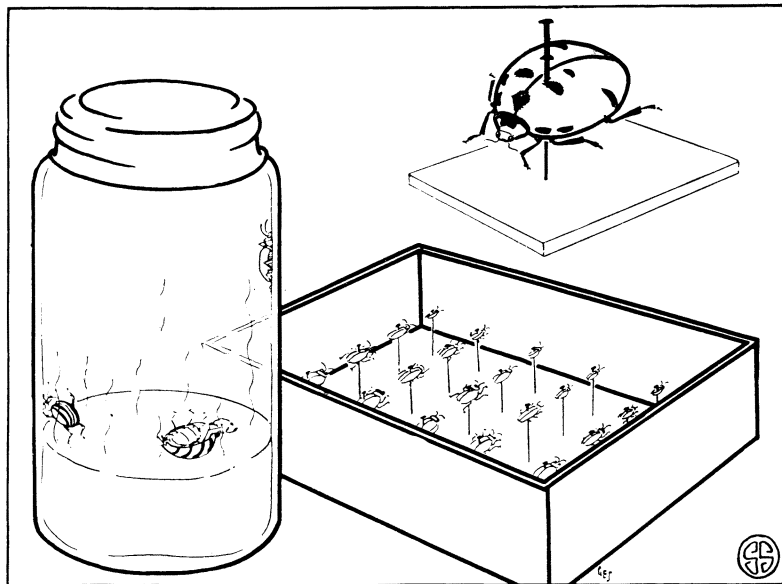


ENTOMOLOGY

Inexpensive Summer Fun

Collecting Insects Takes You Outdoors, Needs Little Cash

(First of a series of 12 articles. Next week—Collecting Wild Flowers)



WHAT YOU NEED

A pint fruit jar makes a suitable killing jar at very small expense for the necessary chemicals. You can use a cigar box as your specimen tray. When pinning the beetle, pass the pin through one of his hard wing-covers, not between them, or else there is danger that the insect will come apart.

YOU don't need to spend a lot of money to have a lot of fun cultivating a scientific hobby, at least in its beginning stages. If the collecting fever really takes hold, you'll probably empty your pocketbook on your hobby, anyway, but you can take a trial spin at it for next to nothing.

If the notion of making a collection of insects appeals to you, for example, you don't even need to buy a butterfly net. If you are handy with tools you can make one for yourself; but in some ways the beginner at "bug-hunting" may even be better off without a net.

Butterflies, for all their attractiveness, are not the best insects to begin on. They are fragile and hard to handle, and they take up a lot of room. The same may be said for dragonflies, crane-flies and many other insects that require a net for their capture.

Beetles are almost an ideal group for

starting-out purposes. They can be caught in the fingers as they lumber along the ground or cling to trees and bushes. They can be found by turning over sticks and stones in the woods, or by digging the bark off rotten logs with a stout knife or the point of a

trowel. They don't get messy in handling, and they don't take up much room in your trays or boxes.

Several other groups of insects offer somewhat the same advantages. You might prefer to try scooping up water-bugs, or nabbing grasshoppers, katydids and crickets, or even capturing the wild cockroaches of the woods, which are quite different animals from the pests that haunt our houses.

One piece of equipment is necessary for any kind of insect collecting. This is a killing bottle. It is cruel to carry captive insects around alive, and to stick pins through them without first humanely killing them is not to be thought of. So every collector carries a wide-mouthed bottle with a tight stopper, into which he puts his insects, along with some chemical whose fumes are quickly lethal to insect life.

A common pint fruit jar makes a good killing bottle. You can have your druggist mix a little potassium cyanide (extremely poisonous stuff; look out for it!) with plaster of Paris and pour it into the bottle. Or you can cut several thicknesses of blotting paper of the right size for the jar, and onto these pour a few drops of chloroform or carbon tetrachloride.

Common pins aren't the best things for pinning out insects but they'll do all right, especially if you try to get thin ones. Don't pin your beetle exactly in the middle, between his two wing-covers, but thrust the pin through one of these hard, shell-like halves; it will hold better there.

You don't need expensive special boxes or trays for your collection. Cigar boxes will do well enough, for a start. Or if you use shallow cardboard boxes, cover the bottom with pieces of thick, soft cardboard, or of flat-surfaced corrugated paper. This makes it easier to set the pins.

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For more information

send this coupon

to Science News Letter, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Please send me additional information about collecting insects and your list of books and leaflets on the subject.

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