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Use of Pooters

Our standard pooters are designed to assist in the safe collection of live invertebrates and are a valuable resource for schools and young pupils.. They are not designed for continuous use by students or for research where a more rugged pooter is required

Before Use

1. ***Make sure the mechanical filter is fitted into the air extraction tube.***
2. If the pooter is not new then please ensure that the tubes placed in the mouth are sterile. A solution used for sterilizing babies feed bottles works well.
3. Make sure users are instructed not to pass pooters around amongst themselves or to blow into the pooter (this causes condensation as well as loosing specimens and is unhygienic).

Use

1. Place the collecting tube close to the specimen being hunted and suck air through the air extractor tube.
2. A sudden suck rather than a long slow suck is more effective.
3. Specimens can be examined in the pooter or transferred to the similar sized collecting pots.
4. Use of a magnifier is easier when the specimens are in a shallow container and are therefore restricted, or using a 'bug box ' type magnifier

Conservation.

1. Specimens should not be left for any period of time in the pooter especially as condensation can build up and stick light insects to the tubes or walls of the container.
2. Specimens should be returned to their natural habitat.

Other Considerations—January 2005 update

It has been brought to our notice that spores may be ingested when using a pooter. In particular fern spores may be ingested when sorting leaf litter. It is known that some ferns are carcinogenic if eaten at certain stages and the sap may be carcinogenic, and for this reason, the use of ferns in food preparation has been positively discouraged for many years. We have not seen any papers concerning the possible carcinogenic nature of fern spores, and if so, the amount and degree of exposure necessary. We would welcome references on this matter.

At certain seasons any examination of some ferns will induce liberation of clouds of spores which may easily be inhaled and must be present in local leaf litter for some time afterwards. If you have concerns about ingestion of spores then the use of a fine technical fabric with guaranteed mesh size may reduce the risk. Fern spores are quite large and we will supply 52 or 53 micron mesh (0.053 mm) for use with the pooter. This is expensive at £27.00 a square meter but only small pieces are needed. If you require finer mesh then that is available.

The mesh can either be placed around the existing mechanical filter and held by a cable tie or elastic band; or placed over the mouth end of the inhale tube.. Placing it around the original filter will reduce the possibility of spores entering the tube, placing it on the mouth piece creates a better seal but allows spores to be in the tube.

Using the additional fine mesh does raise issues of sterilisation. The mechanical filter was deliberately designed to remove the use of fabric material completely as it is difficult to sterilise. If fabric is used as a filter before or after the inhale tube the it must be restricted to single person use and we suggest destroyed at the end of the session. Sterilisation by total immersion in appropriate fluid may work but ensuring all of such a fine material is sterilised requires careful attention to method.

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