

78-560 Insect Pitfall Trap

Introduction:

The world is full of insects. The weight of every ant in the world far exceeds the weight of all humans. Because they are found in all levels of food webs and are so abundant, they are key species. This makes them useful for studying the environment. An event that affects insects is likely to affect every other organism in that food web. Insects are very hardy as well, and are very adaptable to changing conditions. These features make them useful for studying ecosystems.

In addition, soil dwelling insects play a crucial role in our food supply. Certain invasive species can have a very negative affect on crop growth, either destroying the plants or taking nutrients out of the soil. Other insects are vital for plant growth. Some insects clean and fertilize soil. Worms, although they are not insects, are vital because they aerate the ground, helping air and nutrients to spread.

In addition, many insects are quite fascinating organisms. They have evolved myriad techniques and structures to help them survive. Of all creatures, they are the most varied. This makes them extremely interesting to observe and study.

Operation: to use your insect pitfall trap, you will need a small trowel or similar device. Dig a small hole the height and diameter of the trap in the location you wish to study. It is best to have the mouth of the funnel approximately ¼” below the surface of the ground; this way, the insects are less likely to detect the trap. The rest is simple. As the insects travel along on their business, some of them will step into the funnel and be deposited in the jar below. Although insects can often walk on walls, there are unlikely to escape the trap for two reasons: firstly, glass is too slick for many of them, and secondly, the funnel blocks their exit from the jar. Although they could walk down the funnel and climb out, insects are not intelligent enough to realize this.

The type of insects you capture depends on your location. Areas you might wish to sample are lawns, flowerbeds, beneath hedges, compost areas, gravel, or any interesting location. Expect to capture ants, beetles, centipedes and millipedes, grasshoppers, larva, or even some flying insects. Wasps and flies might enter the jar for a meal, only to become trapped. You may also catch non-insects such as worms, or even small amphibians and reptiles.

Make sure you check the trap every day. The insects will starve if left unattended for too long, and if it rains or the soil is wet, they will drown. It is wasteful to allow the insects to die in the trap.

To empty the trap, simply dig it up and carry it upright. Empty the contents into a box, pan, or similar container. You may wish to cover the mouth of the funnel with a piece of paper to further limit escape possibilities. You can also grasp an insect with a pair of tweezers and remove it that way.

Warranty and Parts:

We replace all defective or missing parts free of charge. Additional replacement parts may be ordered toll-free. We accept MasterCard, Visa, checks and School P.O.s. All products warranted to be free from defect for 90 days. Does not apply to accident, misuse or normal wear and tear. Not designed for children under 13 years of age.

May we suggest:

6002-B13 Insect Pinning Block: This is a traditional three-step style pinning block. It is made of hardwood with pinholes that are set at 23 mm, 12 mm, and 7 mm. The block is 25 x 76 x 23 mm high.

