

Entomology: Insect Display Boxes

Insect collections should be kept in sturdy boxes to protect them from dust and pests. Boxes can be any size, but moderate-sized ones are better than large, heavy cases. You can make a temporary collection box out of a small cardboard or plastic box, or a more permanent, glass top display box.

Temporary Display Box

Materials needed

- Sturdy cardboard or plastic box, approximately 3 by 6 by 8 inches, such as a shoe box
- Piece of styrofoam, soft fiberboard, cork, balsa, Celotex, or corrugated cardboard
- Glue
- Moth crystals*
- Small box, such as a pill or safety match box

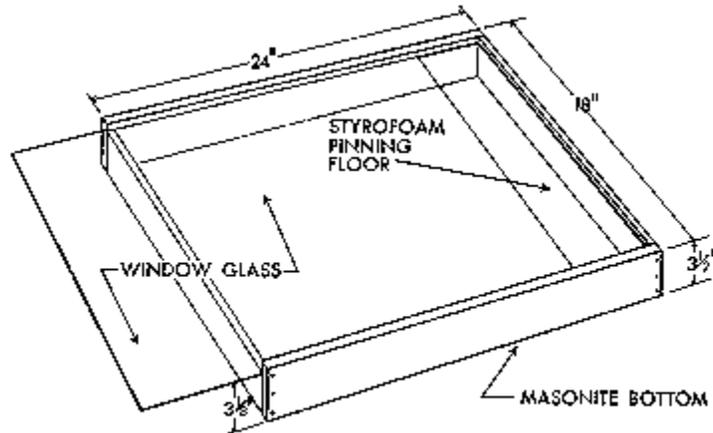
Procedure

1. Cut the styrofoam or other material to fit the bottom of the box snugly. Glue the piece to the bottom of the sturdy cardboard or plastic box.
2. To prevent possible damage to your collection by small dermestid beetles, put a moth ball on an insect pin in each corner of the box. Heat the pin before inserting it through the moth ball. (Be careful -- it's hot!) Moth flakes can also be used. Put the flakes into a pill box or similar container and fasten this into a corner with insect pins. (*Be sure to read and follow storage and handling directions for moth balls and/or moth flakes.)
3. Put the insects in the box on insect pins.
4. Arrange the insects in neatly spaced rows according to order.



Glass Top Display Box

If you wish to maintain your collection for a number of years, a glass top display box will be more satisfactory than a cardboard or plastic box. Glass top insect boxes can be purchased from supply houses or can be made according to the illustration below.



Materials needed

- One piece of masonite or hardboard, 18 by 24 inches
- Two side pieces of pine, 3/4 by 3 1/2 by 24 inches
- One end piece of pine, 3/4 by 3 1/2 by 16 1/2 inches
- One end piece of pine, 3/4 by 3 1/8 by 16 1/2 inches
- One piece of styrofoam or soft fiberboard, 16 1/2 by 22 1/2 inches
- One piece of window glass, 1/8 inch thick by 17 by 23 1/2 inches

Procedure

Construct according to the diagram above.