



How to Pin Adult Insects

Any insect that is large enough to be supported on a pin without breaking or being distorted is pinned directly through the body. Pin insects within 4 to 48 hours after collecting. There are helpful video pinning demonstrations available in Unit 4, section 7 of the Oregon 4-H Entomology website at <http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/projects/natural-science/entomology>.

1. Use #2 or #3 size pins depending on the size of the insect.
2. Pin the insect according to the chart on page 2 of this information sheet.
3. Hold the insect between the thumb and forefinger of one hand. Insert the pin in the proper place with the other hand. Alternatively, place the insect on a soft, level surface, such as Styrofoam or cork, and then pin.

Flies and other insect with mouthparts that extend downward: Make a hole in the Styrofoam for the mouth parts so the head does not turn sideways, as it will on a flat surface.



4. Push the insect down the pin leaving a 3/8 inch space from the insect to the head of the pin to allow for safe handling of the specimen.
5. Place the insect on a flat, soft surface (Styrofoam, cork) to arrange legs and antennae into natural positions. The legs tend to get pressed to the underside of the insect in the pinning process. Use additional insect pins in the Styrofoam to hold the body parts until the insect is dry.
6. Insects with long antennae: Arrange the antenna along the sides of the insect over the legs. Place a pin at an angle over the top of the antennae to hold them down until dry. Pins can also be used to position antennae behind the head. Keep antennae away from the pin placed in the insect's thorax.

Where to pin:

Insect	Location
Hymenoptera: Bees, Wasps Diptera: Flies	Pin through the thorax between the bases of fore wings and slightly to the right of the middle line.
Lepodoptera: Butterflies, moths, Odonata: Dragonflies	Pin through the center of the thorax between the bases of the forewings
Orthopera: Grasshoppers, crickets	Pin through the prothorax or "saddle" slightly to the right of center line.
Hemiptera: True bugs	Pin through the scutellum. This is the triangular area between the bases of the wings.
Coleoptera: Beetles	Pin through the forepart of the right wing cover slightly to the right of the center line.

