Capturing and Displaying Insects

1. Why do we Collect and Display Insects?
   1. They are very diverse and come in many sizes, shapes, and colors, making for a fun display
   2. Insects are very important in the environment
      1. They are indicators of environmental/water quality. More species generally indicate a healthier ecosystem with more biodiversity
      2. They are the most successful group of animals in the world by far. Insect species outnumber all other animal species many times over
      3. They are an important food source for larger animals and fish
      4. They are found everywhere except Antarctica and the oceans
      5. They are important pollinators
      6. They may spread diseases (malaria, yellow fever, west nile virus, etc.)
      7. They help recycle organic matter
   3. It teaches how to scientifically classify animals
2. How do we collect insects?
   1. By hand
   2. With nets
      1. Aerial
      2. Aquatic
      3. Sweep
   3. Use light to attract night flying insects
      1. Light trap
      2. White sheet with light shining on it
   4. Pitfall traps (jars buried in the ground with antifreeze/water mix)
3. Killing the insect
   1. Jar with fingernail polish remover
   2. Put in freezer
4. Displaying the Insects
   1. Insects are held above the display surface by using pins
   2. Put in glass covered case if possible, but can use anything like an old shoe box
   3. Pin most insects through the center of the thorax (middle segment)
      1. Beetles are pinned through the upper right side of the abdomen (last segment)
      2. Butterflies and moths are pinned with wings spread
5. Pinning butterflies and moths
   1. Before pinning take out of the freezer and let it warm up for a few minutes, or soften the insect with steam
   2. Place the pinned insect in the slot of the board
   3. Use pins to carefully pull the wings into position one by one.
      1. Hold the wings in place with strips of paper and pins. Do not pierce the wings with pins
      2. The key is having the back edge of the front wing straight across. The hind wing can be tucked slightly underneath the front wing
      3. The antennae can also be placed with pins on each side
6. Label the Insect
   1. The label enables other people to know where and when you caught your insect so they can try to catch one for their own collection or for research
   2. The insect should be on the top third of the pin , the label on the bottom third
   3. The first line should have the county and state where collected
   4. The second line should have the date of the collection day/month/year (all four digits)
   5. The third line should have the name of the collector
   6. The fourth line should indicate where/what the insect was caught (i.e. apple tree, pitfall trap, light trap, log)
   7. A second label can be used to show classification: Order, Family, Genus, species (if known), common name