

Insects and People - Entomology 101

The Insect Morgue

The Maurice T. James Entomological Collection

Today you will be visiting the M. T. James Entomological Collection of which your instructor, Richard Zack, is the curator. The Collection is located in Room 157 of the Food Science and Human Nutrition Building. The Collection will be open from 10:30 am until 1 pm. You may visit at any time during this period. There will be no other class today.

The M. T. James Entomological Collection houses just over 1.5 million specimens of insects and related arthropods as well as a significant library and collection of photographic slides. While the Collection contains insects from throughout the world, its main concern is the fauna of the Pacific Northwest, especially Washington State. The Collection had its start in the founding days of the University. As the Land Grant institution for the state of Washington, one of the mandates of Washington State University was to serve and support the agricultural community. A collection of insects allowed for more efficient identifications and helped educate generations of students. The Collection still contains some of those first specimens; many are labeled "Washington Territory" and were collected before the beginning of the Twentieth Century.

The Collection has grown significantly over the years and continues to do so. Its value as a resource to the local and international entomological communities is stronger today than ever. Between 10,000 and 30,000 specimens are added annually to the Collection as well as significant library holdings. The James Collection is consistently ranked as one of the top 15 university collections in the United States.

An entomological collection is akin to a library in which every specimen is equivalent to a book or manuscript. Each provides information that will help to solve current and future problems. A working entomological collection:

1. Maintains an entomological and thus biological and environmental history of a geographic area
2. Provides comparative specimens and expertise to perform identifications
3. Provides information on insects and other arthropods to those needing assistance
4. Provides specimens for those conducting systematic and biological studies (anywhere in the world)
5. Provides an educational tool

.....And on and on

Enjoy your tour of this irreplaceable biological and entomological resource!