

Insect sampling and collecting policy

All insect collecting or sampling at the Arboretum requires a permit or permission through the Research unit. Our policy is designed to serve research questions and education goals, while protecting insect populations and conserving rare or listed endangered species (such as the rusty patched bumble bee).

Methods:

These methods are likely to be approved:

- simple butterfly netting (e.g., of monarchs for tagging)
- dragonfly netting
- cloth dragging (e.g., tick sampling)
- CO₂ traps (e.g., mosquito sampling)
- pit-fall traps for ground-dwelling insects
- collecting leaves with eggs or larvae of species that are not federally or state protected for educational displays
- photography

These methods may NOT be used:

- blind sweep netting
- blue vane traps
- bee bowls
- pan traps
- malaise traps

These methods will be considered on a case by case basis:

- netting from flowers or plants (especially if bees are present)
- capturing bees in vials or vacuum devices

Because the Arboretum is a known habitat for the federally endangered rusty patched bumble bee, bumble bees cannot be handled. Other bee species should not be handled if the identification of the bee is not known.

Equipment and practices:

Sweep nets (usually made of sturdy fabric) are used to sample insect populations by “sweeping” the ground or other vegetation in a consistent pattern, without targeting specific individuals, and “butterfly” nets (usually made of light mesh) are generally used when an individual insect is the target.

It is important to avoid accidentally capturing bumble bees when netting insects with any kind of sampling equipment. Netting individual butterflies, moths, dragonflies, or beetles may be allowed, when it is certain that other insects will not be captured. This activity should be closely supervised by Arboretum staff (e.g., netting monarch butterflies to tag them).

Sweeping should not be done in areas where bumble bees may be present (especially rusty patched bumble bees). This includes areas with forbs in bloom, and areas with appropriate ground nesting sites. Sweeping on lawns may be allowed, if there are no flowers (such as creeping Charlie or clovers) in bloom in the lawn.

Visitors, school groups, classes, and camps may not use nets or capture insects at the Arboretum unless they are working closely with qualified Arboretum staff following best practices listed in this policy.