

# Make your own insect sweep net

One of the best ways to catch insects is to use a sweep net. They are available from biological supply stores, or you can easily make your own!

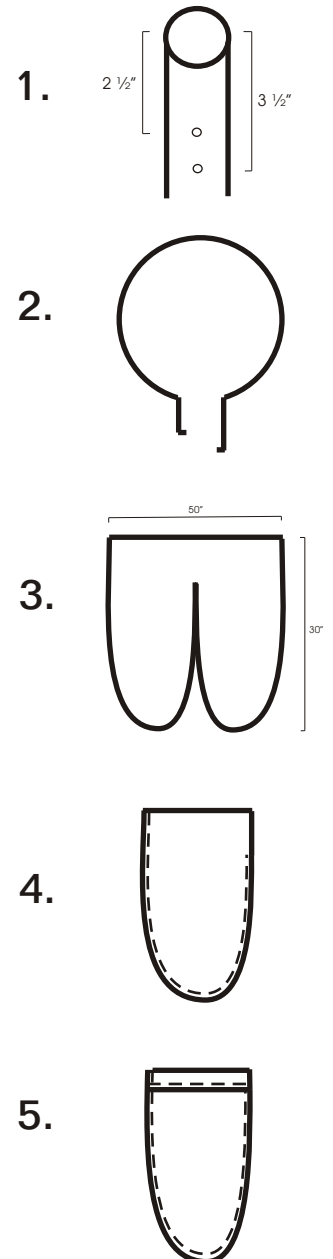
## What you will need:

- a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " dowel rod, 3' long
- a drill
- a wire coat hanger
- a piece of sturdy cloth (cotton, canvas, muslin or tightly-woven nylon) about 50" x 30"
- needle and thread
- electrical tape

## What to do:

1. Drill a hole through the dowel rod 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from one end. The hole must be large enough to accept the coat hanger wire. Drill another hole directly under the first hole, about 3  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the end of the dowel rod.
2. Straighten the coat hanger. Bend it into a circle. Sharply bend each end of the wire to form two arms, one about 3" long and one about 4" long. These arms will lie along the end of the dowel rod. Bend the tips of the arms so that they fit into the holes you have drilled in the dowel rod.
3. Cut the cloth into the shape illustrated at right.
4. Fold the two halves of the net together and sew the curved edges together with about a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam. Leave the upper 10" on one side unsewn.
5. Fold down the top 5" of the net. Double it down again to make a 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam. Sew the seam down securely to form a reinforced channel for the wire hoop.
6. Push the hoop through the channel at the top of the net bag, leaving the arms sticking out.
7. Place the bent tips of the arms into the holes drilled into the dowel rod and secure the wire to the dowel rod with electrical tape.

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## How to use it:

To use your new sweep net, move it back and forth gently through vegetation (long grass is ideal). Try to swing the net in a figure-eight motion so that the open end of the net is always leading the way. After sweeping through the vegetation for a while, check to see if you have caught any creatures. If so, close the net by gently pinching it shut near the top. One of the best ways to get creatures out of the net is to turn it inside out over a white cloth. The creatures can then be picked up carefully and placed into jars for observation. Don't forget to release them after you've looked at them for a while. By the way, if you happen to see a bee or wasp in your net, the best thing to do is to stand still with the net open. The insect will most likely crawl out and fly away without bothering you.

