

A Few Pointers on Looking at Insects in the Garden – part 4 – Ground Dwellers

Interested in discovering what insects and other invertebrates make your backyard home? Then take part in the following activity.

Collecting in the Leaf Litter

Scavengers and decomposers live in leaf litter and break down the litter and other plant material, dead animals and wastes in the soil. They are vital to the nutrient cycles of all land ecosystems.

Equipment you will need:

Gloves

Specimen jars (glass or plastic container that has a good seal and holes for ventilation).

White bed sheet or similar, white paper etc.

Garden rake

Method:

Put gloves on, advised anytime you are messing around in the ground.

Rake up some leaves- enough to fill a couple of plastic shopping bags.

Once home:

Place leaves on to white paper and place in the sun.

Leave for a short time, perhaps 20 minutes.

Shake the sheet or paper, remove leaves on top. Underneath is where the invertebrates will be.

Use your jars to catch specimens. (Don't forget to have air holes)

Look, record the type of invertebrate on the record sheet.

[If you can, take photos of the invertebrates you find. Photos can tell you a lot about your study site - your backyard.](#)

Some beetles, like this ground beetle, have no wings and hunt invertebrates to feed on.



Huntsman spiders are commonly found in leaf litter and on tree trunks. This spider has a mole cricket from which it is feeding.

