

Insect Zoos

Sometimes, farmers are not sure whether a particular insect is a pest, a farmers' friend or is simply resting on the crop. He or she could take advice on this, but seeing is believing, and there is a simple way of checking. The farmer can put the insect into a small container, preferably clear glass or plastic, then also put in some of the vegetation it was found on, together with any other pests which were present on the crop. A piece of tissue paper should be put between the lid and the container to absorb moisture from the vegetation. The container should be kept out of direct sunlight. If the insect eats the crop, it's a pest and if it eats the pests, it's a friend.

To find out more about the life stages of arthropods and to help identify unknown arthropods, the farmer could collect eggs, larvae, nymphs or pupae and keep them in the containers until they reach the adult stage which is usually easier to identify.

