



May 23, 2019



Dear Parents of 7<sup>th</sup> Graders,

Summer vacation has just begun, but before you know it, we will be back in school. Seventh grade science students begin the year with a major project – an insect collection. This letter is to inform you about the insect project. It will be due Thursday, September 19, 2019.

For this project, each student needs to complete an insect collection of at least 25 different insects. Summer is a great time to begin collecting insects; they are plentiful, and many 7<sup>th</sup> graders have time on their hands. In addition, if you take family trips, you may be able to collect insects from other areas of the US. By beginning to collect bugs now, you will be able to collect a wide variety and have some extras in case some pictures are blurry. This opportunity also gives extra time to those who may be involved in sports or other extracurricular activities in the fall.

This will be a photo insect collection and students are to take their own pictures of insects.

- Photos should be close ups of the insect and should be clear enough to identify the insect from the picture.
  - They should not be blurry, too dark, or too light, nor too far away.
  - Pay attention to light and shadows as this can affect the picture.
  - If possible, placing a ruler next to the insect helps with measuring the size of the insect. (You may kill the insects first and then take the picture. (See directions below on making a kill jar.)
  - It's a good idea to take multiple pictures of the same kind of insect. Then you can choose the best photo of that insect for your collection.
- Since we are relying only on photos for identification, **it is imperative** that students take good notes when the photos are taken. Students should have a notebook (5 x 8 would be a good size). Notes should be made when the photo is taken.
  - Notes should include:
    1. Coloring - Bright yellow with brown/black stripes about ¼ inch wide
    2. Actual Size - Measurements in mm or in
    3. Description of the place found (i.e. Found in the backyard on rose bush; or Lancaster, PA, in wooded area)
    4. Date and time insect was found
    5. Any other notes of interest, or that might help with identification
- **NO PHOTOS** may be taken at the zoo. (The zoo has some exotic species that will be hard to identify and we want to be fair to everyone.)
- Photo prints should be 4 x 6. You may print on photo paper or regular copy paper.
- A photo editing program may be used to resize the print and to make only minor adjustments to the photo itself. When resizing, be sure you do not blur the picture, making identification harder.
- You may choose to capture and kill your insects before photographing them. (Dead insects don't move around as much as live ones.)
  - If you chose this option, please take pictures as soon as possible after killing so as to maintain the integrity of color and markings.
  - Insects should be placed on a neutral background so they can be seen clearly.
  - Directions for freezing and making a kill jar can be found at: <https://bughunter.tamu.edu/preservation/killingspecimens/>. Freezing is the preferred method.

Feel free to contact the school via email with questions. Enjoy the rest of your summer, and we look forward to seeing you in August.

In Christ,  
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