Pinning Insects

Nooo!!!

Pins are a useful way to store insects without damaging delicate parts. However, not all insects can be pinned - some are simply too soft or too small. These insects are usually mounted on microscope slides or stored in ethanol. If you think that the insect you have collected is too soft of too small, check with your teacher before going any further.

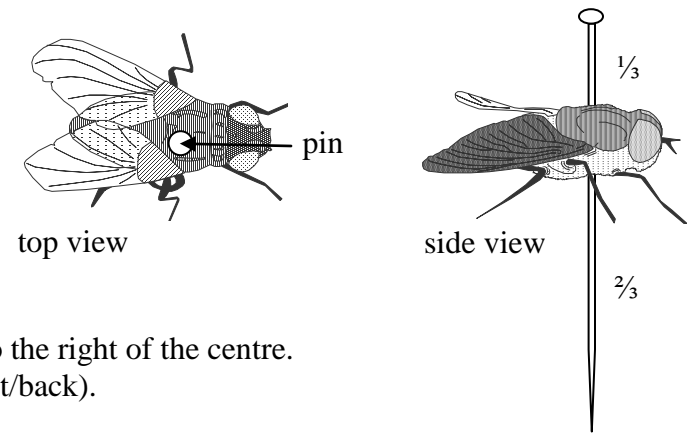There are two main ways in which insects can pinned for long-term storage.

Pinning:

Used for mature insects large enough to have a pin through them.

pin

top view   side view

⅓

⅔

Steps:

1. Place insect on its back and see where the legs are attached.
2. Flip insect over and insert pin above the area where the legs come out and just to the right of the centre.
3. Push the pin down ⅔ of its length – the insect should be level (left/right and front/back).
4. Place the label on the pin ½ way between the point of the pin and the insect.
5. Gently arrange the legs and wings so they are neatly spread out. You can use another pin[*] to do this, but be careful not to damage the insect.
6. Once the insect has dried and hardened, it can be placed in an insect store box.

[*] A nylon filament ½ mm in diameter and 4-5 cm long is softer than a pin. Stick the end through a piece of cork for easier handling.

Pointing:

Used for insects too small to pin normally.

pin
point

top view   side view

Steps:

1. Place insect on its back and see where the legs are attached.
2. Bend the fine end of a paper point so it can be attached to the side of the insect with glue
3. Put a pin ⅔ of its length through the wide end of a paper point and place a <u>small</u> amount of glue on the fine end of the point.
4. Using forceps, flip the insect over so the glue on the point is under where the legs attach.
5. Arrange the insect so it is level of the point (left/right and front/back).
6. Place the label on the pin ½ way between the point of the pin and the insect.

Reference: Walker, A.K. & Crosby, T.K. 1988. *The preparation and curation of insects*. DSIR Information Series 163. Science Information Publishing Centre, DSIR, Wellington, New Zealand. 91pp.