Another collecting technique is beating. You can use a beating tray or an A3 sheet of paper put underneath a bush, but the easiest way is to use an umbrella: a pale-coloured umbrella. You put it up and you hold it by the handle underneath a bush. Then you beat the bush and what you are looking for are invertebrates that fall down when they are disturbed.

You wet your finger with some metho and put them into the container. This is a good method for collecting ants, beetles, spiders.

Another popular way of collecting insects is using a hand net or a butterfly net. Now while you can run around the countryside trying to catch butterflies with a butterfly net, it’s not that easy. In fact, you can use an insect net to sweep vegetation. (Here there are sounds of Chris sweeping the branches and leaves of a tree.)

You flip the end of the net so that you’ve captured the insects in this end, and to see the insects you raise the end of the net, and most insects will move up towards the top of the net.

To collect an insect, place your hand carefully underneath the specimen. Take your vial of metho. Take the lid off and very carefully come through the net towards the insect, keeping the insect above and away from your hand. Then tap the top and the insect will fall into the vial.

November 2010