

Making a Microscope Slide of Pollen Grains

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1 Preparation

1. Remove the stamens of the flower with a pair of tweezers and put them in a watch-glass.
2. Examine the pollen grains under a stereomicroscope (Low power lens) and note the colour.
3. Add absolute alcohol with a dropper pipette and rinse the stamens (5 mins.).
4. Remove the stamens and debris, using tweezers.
5. Swirl the contents of the watch-glass and then carefully remove most of the alcohol with a pipette.
6. Add 2 or 3 drops of stain and wait for 30 sec., again swirling the watch-glass contents. (Nb. The stain is safranin dissolved in absolute alcohol. It will stain fingers and clothes as well as pollen !)
7. Remove most of the stain and replace with absolute alcohol. Swirl again and remove this alcohol straight away.
8. Repeat the rinsing process described in 7. above twice.
9. Add about 3 - 5 drops of 50 % glycerine / water, using the pipette with this liquid. Leave this pipette with the liquid please. Put the watch glass on the hot-plate and leave for a few minutes to warm up.

2 Mounting

NOTE. Keep everything warm.

1. Put a warm slide on a card guide.
2. Add a small drop of liquefied glycerine jelly to the centre of the slide, using a small glass dropper-rod provided. Please do not take the dropper away.
3. Transfer a small drop of dilute glycerine (containing the pollen grains) from your watch glass to the drop of glycerine on the slide. To do this, use the end of a small glass rod to pick up the drop of liquid and twist it off into the glycerine drop. Wipe the rod on a cloth and leave it on the hot-plate.

4. Cover with a warmed cover slip, using tweezers and a mounted needle. Hold the slip at an angle of about 30 to the slide and lower it so that one side just touches the drop of mountant. Steady that side with a mounted needle and slowly lower the higher side of the slip. (If necessary, pass the slide briefly through a spirit burner flame to spread the mountant.)
5. Leave the preparation on the hotplate for a few minutes and then remove to cool.
6. Add a temporary label with your name and details of the preparation.