

# A Few Pointers on looking at Insects in the Garden- part 1

1. **F**lowering trees and bushes are a great place to start looking. Here you can find all sorts of nectar feeding beetles from flower scarabs to jewel beetles. If you have a pair of binoculars this will help you see the blossom much more easily as many insects bury themselves deep within the blossom. If you have no binoculars look for bushes with low blossom. Then just scout over the blossom for any activity inside the flowers. Beware of bees and wasps which also frequent flowers.



↑ Palm tree blossom with green flower scarabs

2. **L**ook under logs and rocks, a great place for ground beetles to hide. Make sure you always flip the log or rock in a way that it is away from yourself. Instead, flip the log or rock from the back to you and look over to see what may be underneath. → If you do flip over a log or rock always return the log or rock to its original position.



Beware of other critters that may be hiding underneath such as scorpions, centipedes, spiders and snakes. Never put your hand where you cannot see! This can be a safe activity as long as you turn the log/rock as in the picture above.

3. **I**f you catch an insect in a jar, always add a leaf or twig in the jar so the insect can take hold. Keeping any insect in this jar for more than 2 days it may die, so return your insect to the wild as soon as you have had a good look at it. Some insects will feed or drink on a piece of ripe banana. Some insects won't feed at all. Don't forget to have air-holes in the lid of your jar otherwise they will die.
4. Most insects will not drink from a water dish, so never put a dish of water in the jar, they can drown. You could try a tissue, rolled up and soaked in water. Ring the water out and add to bottom of jar.
5. Handle your pet insects with care. Insects need to be handled gently and carefully. Pinching a grub with two fingers can injure the grub. Instead, let the grub or caterpillar walk onto your hand. A pinching grasp is fine for lifting up large beetles. But again, you can just let the beetle walk up onto your hand.



Beware as some beetles can bite, such as ground beetles, hold on either side of abdomen.

Image: ground beetle *Philoscopus mastersi*

## Insects You Should NOT Handle.

Caution should always be applied when it comes to picking up any insect. Insects like water bugs, assassin bugs, hairy caterpillars and of course wasps, bees, stink bugs and biting ants, all can either sting, bite, pinch or spray you with smelly fluids. So it is important to learn more about insects and have an enjoyable experience. Most insects pose no harm to us humans.

You will come across spiders during your search, best to avoid all spiders, unless an adult can confirm your find as harmless.