

# A Few Pointers on looking at Insects in the Garden- part 2 Stick Insects.

**T**rees and bushes are a great place to start looking for stick insects. You simply scan the plant for any odd looking stick bits. Many stick insects hang under the leaves. Look for sticks as thin as the most fragile twig, right up to thick stick like. Then there are those that are a little different like the spiny leaf stick insect which looks more like green or brown leaves.

Many specimens will be low enough to enable you to gather the specimen. For specimens higher up in the foliage use a butterfly net.

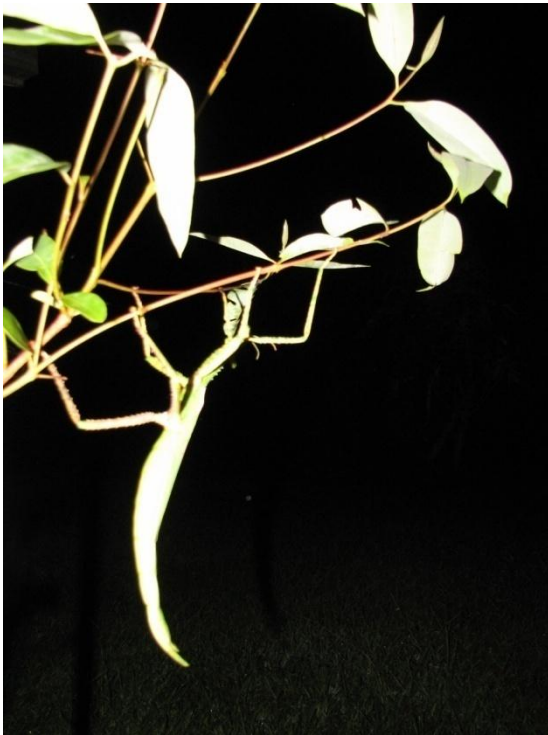
A pair of binoculars will also help you see higher up in the plant.



← Stick insect hanging in a tree.

**A**nother way to find stick insects is to use an item called a beating sheet. This is made from a piece of material, usually white; this makes it easier to see specimens.

To use, hold or place the beating sheet beneath branches. With a stick, hit the leaves a few times to dislodge any insects sitting on the plant. Watch for moving insects on the sheet. You may find small nymphs, right up to adults.



**N**ight is a good time to look for stick insects as many are night feeders. A good strong torch is required to search at night. Look for insects moving about, antennae or legs moving.

← As a night feeder this stick insect is hanging out in the open feeding on the leaves.

**Beware** of other critters that may be hiding in the plant foliage such as Spiders and Stink bugs.

1. If you find a stick insect and you would like to keep it for a while you will need a large jar or tank, always add a leaf or twig in the jar so the insect can take hold. Keeping any insect in this jar for more than 1 day without feeding or it may die. So return your insect to the wild as soon as you have had a good look at it. Don't forget to have air-holes in the lid of your container otherwise the insect will die.

2. Feeding is possible when it comes to stick insects. Most are found on or near the plant that they are feeding on. So when you find a stick insect, take a cutting off the plant that you found the stick insect. Using a water filled jar with a hole in the lid, place the cutting into the hole and push it down till it sits in water. Add the stick insect to this food and watch to see if it eats that plant.
3. Stick insects do not drink from a water dish, so never put a dish of water in the jar. Instead, use a hand sprayer and spray the insect morning and afternoon.
4. Handle your pet insect with care. Insects need to be handled gently and carefully. Let the stick insect walk onto your hand.

## 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.