

Let's make a sweep net

What you will need:

The following readily available items are all that you will need:

- Two wire coat hangers
- A piece of wood (a shortened broom handle or a strong cane will do)
- An old, light-coloured, preferably white, pillowcase
- A needle and thread (or a sewing machine)
- Two jubilee clips (You can get these from your local hardware store)
- Duct tape

In addition you will need some 'tools':

- A pair of scissors
- A screwdriver
- A pair of pliers



Instructions:

1. Straighten out your two wire coat hangers and then twist them together. The pliers can be used to hold the ends of the wires while they are being twisted together.



2. Form your twisted wires into a circle leaving a short length, around 7cm, sticking out to form the frame of the net.



3. Cut your pillowcase so that it is slightly longer from the closed end than it is wide. If your pillowcase is long enough you can use the open end for another sweep net by stitching the open end completely closed.



4. Fold the cut end of the pillowcase over and stitch it to create a hem, leaving an open section to allow the twisted wire to be threaded through. Leave a section of 5–7cm unstitched.



5. Thread the twisted wire through the material loop created by the hem until the short lengths of wire that are sticking out protrude from the unstitched area.

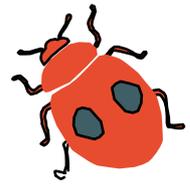


6. Use the jubilee clips to attach the protruding wire to the end of your piece of wood.



7. Wrap the wire and jubilee clips in duct tape to cover all sharp edges and you have finished making your sweep net.





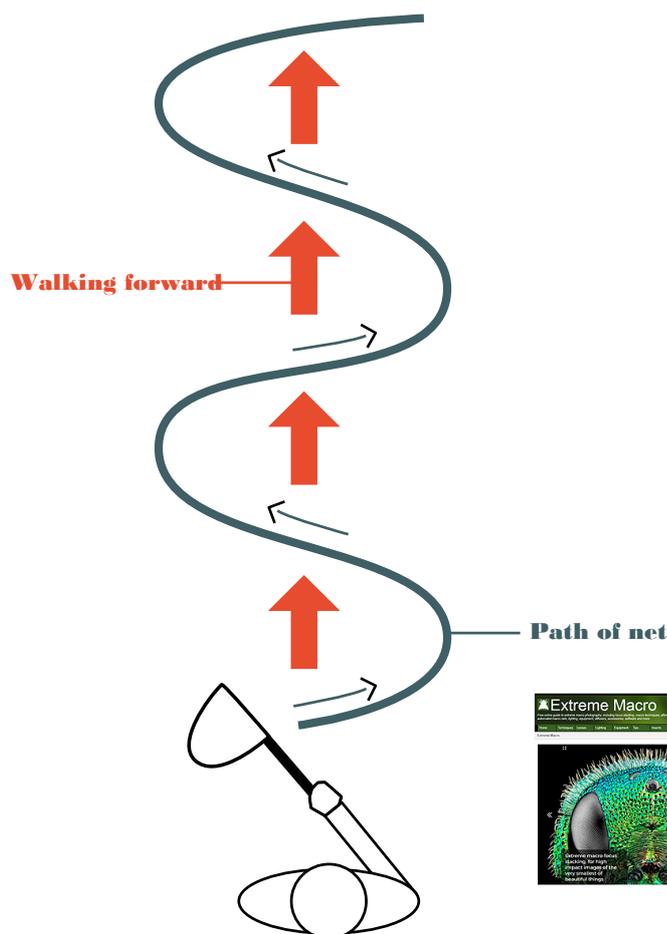
Hints and tips for using your sweep net

Where to use a sweep net

Use a sweep net to gather minibeasts that are in long grass or low vegetation where you can sweep the net without snagging on the plants.

Gathering minibeasts

Walk forward while sweeping the net swiftly from side to side as shown in the illustration.



At the end of the sweep, turn the net with its opening down and horizontal. The bottom of the net will drape over the edge of the frame and will trap any minibeasts that have been caught. See below.



Take the net with its precious contents and carefully tip the minibeasts out on to a large, white sheet of paper.

Now your pupils can examine the contents and record the results.



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Repeat as many times as necessary until you have covered the area being surveyed.