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A SIMPLE AND INEXPENSIVE STATIC SPREADING BOARD FOR MICROLEPIDOPTERA

DAVID R. GILLESPIE

A static spreading board for Microlepidoptera, similar in principle to that described by Martin (1977 pp92-93), but more easily constructed from readily available materials, was devised to save money. It considerably reduced the time and damage involved in handling when compared with a standard, wooden, non-static spreading board.

The board is of styrofoam, 75 mm wide x 280 mm long x 24 mm thick with a longitudinal centre groove (fig. 1). A layer of inexpensive sandwich wrap is fastened to the surface with a silicon sealant and is forced into the groove with a pencil or dowel. Styrofoam sheets of the appropriate thickness are readily available because they are commonly used for insulation.

The dimensions of the groove and the board may be varied to fit almost any need. A groove 10 mm wide and 5 mm deep was suitable for large microlepidoptera but a groove 5 mm wide and 5 mm deep was better for small species.

To use the board, first statically charge it by rubbing with a dry cloth. The wing bases of the

pinned moth should be even with the surface of the board. Blowing from behind the wings forces them to an extended position where they are held in place by the static charge. They are then fastened with glassine paper strips held in place by pins. The thorax of the specimen should be 10 to 11 mm below the head of the mounting pin.

Boards of this design were used in 1979 and 1980 to mount large numbers of reared Lepidoptera, and were especially suitable for Tortricidae.

The sandwich wrap did not remove many scales from the undersides of wings. It is essential that all specimens be freshly killed, as the static system does not work with rehydrated or stiffened specimens. One minor drawback is that after the board has been used many times, the sandwich wrap becomes so perforated that it no longer functions as a static surface, and may actually abrade the wing surfaces. When this happens the layer can simply be replaced.

REFERENCE

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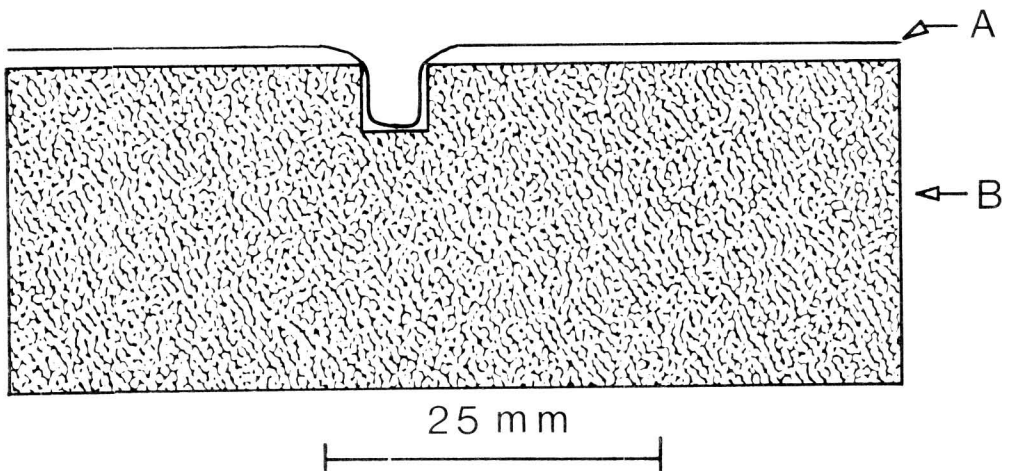


Fig. 1. Cross section of styrofoam spreading board. A, sandwich wrap overlay; B, styrofoam.