



CREEK CRITTERS!

Science With Spokane County Water Resources



HOW TO COLLECT AQUATIC BUGS!

1

PACK SUPPLIES AND PICK A LOCATION

Suggested Supplies (you don't need all of these)

Net, bucket, light-colored container (white dish pan from dollar store works great), white ice-cube tray (optional, but, nice for sorting the different types you find) magnifying glass, white plastic spoon, paint brush, life jacket (to wear for safety), water shoes (if it's summer and you want to wade in shallow water) or boots if you want to collect from the shore.

Locations

Bear Lake, Medical Lake, Liberty Lake, Saltese Flats, and St. George's Kayak Launch are great options. See our [website](#) for the the detailed list of suggested sites! We listed a few of our favorite places to collect, but any creek, pond, wetland, or river will work. Always go with an adult and wear a life jacket.

2

LOOK FOR PLANTS, TREES AND SHRUBS ALONG THE EDGE OF THE WATER.

Bugs like to hang out where trees provide shade, and where leaves and branches fall into the water. Plant debris provide great hiding spaces and food! **Gently** stir up the bottom/submerged leaves/algae/plant by kicking your foot against the bottom and scoop your net back and forth to catch the stream of the water you're stirring up. You can also collect with a bucket or a kitchen strainer. Put your net upside down and shake out the contents into a light-colored container. Fill the container with water so that any critters you catch can breathe.



3

FLIP OVER ROCKS TO FIND CLINGERS AND HIDERS.

Many bugs cling to rocks at the bottom of waterways. If you gently flip over rocks (no larger than your forearm) - you can use a paint brush to brush small clinging bugs off and into your light-colored collection bucket. If you don't have a paintbrush you can use a q-tip, or **gently** use your plastic spoon. Some macros, like giant stoneflies or crayfish will be large enough to scoop up with your net. Crayfish are often found when flipping up rocks.



4

HAVE FUN IDENTIFYING CRITTERS & SAFELY RETURN THEM WHEN DONE

Once you have a good collection in your bucket, use your laminated Key to start identifying the bugs. Use careful observation. Some macros are very small and fast moving, and can be hard to spot right away. If you are patient and look carefully, you will see a lot of life! Your plastic spoon will work great to gently scoop up the bugs from the larger containers so you can take a closer look with your magnifying glass. **Always keep the bugs covered with water so they can breathe!** When you are done, put the bugs back into the stream where you found them. Remember, some live four years, and they are vital food for fish and birds.

