Royal BC Museum
675 Belleville Street
Victoria, BC V8W 9W2

What does "Entomology" mean?
Entomology is the science or study of insects and select arthropod groups. The word comes from the French *entomologie*, coined from the Greek word *entomon* meaning "insect" and *ology* meaning "study of."

What is an insect?
Insects are arthropods – a huge group of animals that includes other familiar invertebrates such as crustaceans, spiders, scorpions, millipedes and centipedes. Arthropods have a segmented body with paired, segmented legs. Their external skeleton is made of a hard material called chitin.

When did the Royal BC Museum start collecting insects?
The earliest collections were assembled in 1886.

How big is the entomology collection?
Our collection contains approximately 240,000 databased specimens/lots, but about 150,000 more are waiting to be documented. Most specimens are from BC, although in some groups the material is from around the world.

How do you store or keep the collection?
About 183,000 specimens are pinned (yep, you read that right: pinned). Another 11,500 lots are in vials of ethanol (a type of alcohol). About 40,000 dragonflies and damselflies (order Odonata) are stored in special plastic zip-lock envelopes.

Who works in entomology collections?
All museum collections have a variety of people who work in them. Typically, there is at least one curator and one collection manager. A curator's job is to decide what is important to keep in the collection and what specimens to accept into the collection. Every museum collection has a goal: at the Royal BC Museum, our goal is to tell the story of insects in British Columbia throughout space and time. A collection manager's job is to take care of the collection by keeping each specimen well preserved and facilitating how specimens come in and out of the collection. Many other people visit the collection such as scientists, researchers, volunteers and community members.