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

What is an invertebrate?
Invertebrates are animals without a backbone or spine. Invertebrates are cold-blooded, meaning they take on the temperature of their environment. Did you know that more than 90% of living animals are invertebrates?

When did the Royal BC Museum start collecting invertebrates?
Some of the oldest specimens in our collection are from the 1800s. Many were collected by Charles F. Newcombe.

How big is the invertebrate collection?
Our collection of invertebrates contains millions of specimens. There are way too many to count! A single jar could contain thousands of tiny planktonic animals.

How do you store or keep the collection?
We store most invertebrate specimens in jars and other containers filled with a liquid preservative, such as ethanol. About a quarter of the collection is dry and includes shells and other solid parts.

Who works in invertebrate 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 invertebrates 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.