

Mississippi Entomological Museum Collection Policy

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Collection use

The Mississippi Entomological Museum (MEM) collection's main purpose is to support scientific research. Scientists can study MEM specimens either through research loans (see loan policy) or on-site visits. Scientists wishing to visit the collection must contact the Director or Curator in advance. The collection is not open to the general public, except for occasional guided tours of small groups for educational purposes. No fees are charged for use of the collection.

All researchers are expected to understand and follow standard museum procedures regarding the proper handling and use of specimens. The integrity of the specimens and their associated data are to be maintained by all who use the collection.

Data use

Specimen data from the MEM are accessible through the ecdysis online database and Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF.org). Digitization of the collection is an ongoing process. If these data are used in a publication, please cite the collection (change dates as needed):

Mississippi Entomological Museum. Occurrence dataset (ID: 1b57b26a-4210-4480-980d-28d9e0fecbf9) https://ecdysis.org/content/dwca/MISSA-MEM_DwC-A.zip accessed via the Ecdysis Portal, ecdysis.org, 2024-11-26).

Acquisitions - collecting

The MEM actively seeks to enhance its collection through the addition of specimens with high quality data. Collecting efforts are concentrated in significant and unique natural habitats in the southeastern United States and focus on taxa in the museum staff's areas of expertise, which currently include Orthoptera, Lepidoptera, Coleoptera, Formicidae, and aquatic Hemiptera. All collections are made in accordance with the laws and regulations of the United States, foreign governments, individual states, and local and private entities. Copies of all collecting permits are kept on file in the MEM.

Acquisitions - donations

Private and public collections that contain high quality specimens labeled with collection data and that are of value for scientific research are accepted for donation, with the understanding that some specimens might not be retained.

The MEM will exercise due diligence to ensure the acquisition will conform to all legal and ethical standards. The MEM will not accept materials that have been collected in a manner that impairs their scientific value (e.g., materials with inadequate documentation). Specimens collected in National Parks cannot be accepted without written permission of the National Park Service. Collecting permits for donated material, if applicable, are kept on file in the MEM. The MEM cannot accept specimens with restrictions that would prevent effective research examination, loan, or disposal in accordance with this policy. The MEM also cannot accept materials on condition that they be kept together permanently as a discrete collection.

Monetary appraisal of donated material for tax purposes must be prepared by an outside party at the donator's expense.

Entomological literature, photographs, supplies, equipment, and other items are accepted with prior approval of the Museum Director.

Acquisitions - voucher specimens and others

The museum serves as a repository for voucher specimens for entomological research. Voucher specimens are required to be labeled in an acceptable manner for the taxa in question. Each voucher specimen is affixed with a label indicating its voucher status and a number corresponding to the research project and publications. New acquisitions of all types are frozen before curation into the collection to kill any potential museum pests.

Deaccessions

Specimens that are badly damaged, lack data or have poor-quality data, and some specimens from very large series are sometimes deaccessioned. These most often occur in newly acquired donations but are sometimes encountered during routine curation of the collection. All such specimens are evaluated by the Curator to ensure they have no scientific value or historical significance. Deaccessioned specimens that are undamaged are usually placed in a teaching collection or educational display. Museum specimens are never sold.

Loan policy

To request a loan, please contact the Curator,
Adam Haberski, ah3953@msstate.edu, 662-325-2989

Loan requests

Loans of MEM specimens are made to institutions and to recognized authorities that have no institutional affiliation. Loans initiated by or for students must be co-signed by their major professor, who agrees to take full responsibility for the care and safe return of the specimens.

Acknowledgement of receipt of specimens

Please sign and return (via mail or email) a copy of the invoice upon receipt of specimens; the second copy is for the borrower's records.

Duration of loans

Loans are normally for a period of three years; extensions to the term of the loan can be made upon written request.

Change of status

The borrower should notify the Curator of any change in status of the loan or borrower, including change of address.

Third parties

No part of the loan may be forwarded to a third party without written approval from the Curator.

Care of specimens

Borrowed specimens should be kept in trays or drawers that clearly indicate they are property of the MEM. If MEM specimens are mixed with those from other collections, each specimen should be individually labeled to indicate it is the property of the MEM. The borrower is responsible for the care of the specimens, which should be protected from breakage, dust, mold, and museum pests.

Databases

Preexisting database labels, if present, should not be removed. These numbers are permanent, unique identifiers that tie specimens to their online database records. MEM numbers are suitable as citation numbers in publications to unambiguously refer to the specimens and should be preferentially used in any database. Borrowers wishing to add new database labels should consult with the Curator.

Dissection of specimens

Genitalia or other structures may be dissected if the parts are preserved in an accepted method for the taxon in question. Genitalia should remain physically attached to the specimen (e.g. genitalia vials on the pin below the specimen), or if separated, labeled with complete label data. In all cases, the genitalia must be returned with the specimens. Type specimens may be dissected only with written permission from the Curator.

Destructive sampling

Extraction of RNA or DNA, sputter coating for SEM, and other consumptive uses are not permitted without the written approval of the Curator. Sequence data from MEM specimens must be made publicly available at GenBank (or equivalent database) at the time of publication. Resulting publications should include a list of voucher/sample numbers and corresponding GenBank accession numbers. A spreadsheet of those data should also be sent to the Curator. Unused material supplied for DNA analysis must be returned.

Microscope slides

Slides prepared by the borrower must be clearly labeled with full label data so they can be easily associated with other parts of the specimen, if any. Slides must be returned at the same time as other specimen parts but packed separately to avoid breakage.

Publication of results

The borrower should acknowledge MEM in any publications based on MEM specimens in whole or in part. The acronym or codon for the Mississippi Entomological Museum is "MEM." A copy of the publication (electronic or hard copy) should be sent to the Curator. When reprints are not available, the Curator should be notified of the publication citation.

Type specimens

All primary types described from MEM material must be returned to MEM. Deposition of secondary types should be arranged with the Curator.

Retention of specimens

Retention or exchange of specimens is permitted subject to approval by the Curator. Retentions should have duplicate label data and represent not more than 1/4 of each species in the loan. Unique specimens, representatives of polymorphic forms, specimens collected in National Parks, and examples from diverse localities must be returned. Borrowers must supply a list of specimens retained along with a copy of their complete label data. Exchanges designed to improve the representation of insects from southeastern United States is encouraged.

Return arrangement of specimens

Arrange specimens so that their identification is unambiguous, with species clearly separated from each other. Determination labels should be placed on each specimen, and all identifying tags or other labels not of lasting importance placed by the borrower should be removed.

Return of specimens

Specimens should be returned in the original, or equally suitable, insect boxes and packed and shipped to insure their safe return. Vials, microscope slides, and other heavy objects should be packed separately from pinned material. Alcohol specimens need to be packed according to IATA regulations. The borrower agrees to cover all costs involved in safely returning specimens to MEM.

National Park specimens

If specimens from US National Parks are used for research leading to a publication, the appropriate National Park(s) should be thanked in the acknowledgements. NPS specimens are not eligible for retention because they are property of NPS.