

Preparing Pollen Slides

If possible use only freshly opened flowers so that contamination from other pollens is avoided. The example below was made using Hawthorne pollen collected in May 2009.



1. Remove anthers from the stamen and place into a small dish. Add a few drops of isopropyl alcohol (IPA) to remove the waxy surface from the pollen grains and to separate them from the anthers. Leave for 10 mins.

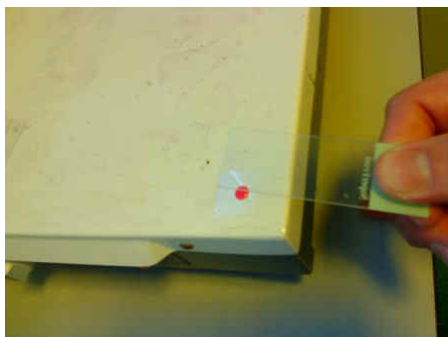
2. Melt the glycerine jelly (around 40°C), preferably in a water bath.

3. Mix the anther and IPA solution and take 2 drops of the liquid. Place in one half of the slide and repeat on the other half. One area will be used with stained glycerine jelly mountant whilst the other is unstained.

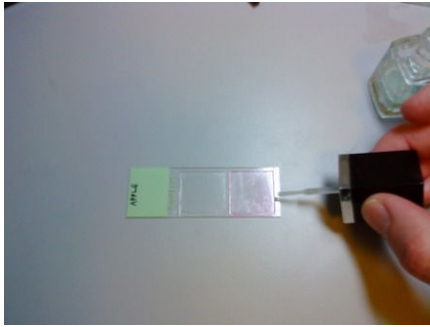
4. Allow the IPA to dry (1-2 mins on a hotplate) and then rinse the slide with a few drops of IPA to remove plant debris.

5. Allow the slide to dry again on the hotplate. Keep the glycerine jelly and coverslips warm.

6. Place a drop of molten glycerine jelly on a warm coverslip. Slowly lower the upturned slide so that the pollen grains contact the jelly. By keeping the slide at a slight tilt and lowering slowly, the inclusion of air bubbles should be minimal.



7. Leave the slide on the hotplate for 5 mins to allow the stain to penetrate the pollen grains.



8. Remove and place the slide in a fridge or somewhere cool until the jelly has fully set.

9. Ring the coverslips with nail varnish to create a semi-permanent pollen slide.

10. Label the slide with the name of the plant and the date the pollen was collected. The date the slide was prepared may also be useful to include.

