



What's Eating Your Collection?

Documenting damage

Documenting damage is an important part of IPM practice. It enables one to determine if damage is worsening and to note what damage already exists. This helps to answer the question "is it new or is it old?" and prevents unnecessary treatments from being carried out.

What should I document and how?

First step.

Record the damage that has been found.

This information should be attached to the object record in some way, so that the information does not become disassociated from the object. Put a note in the object history file, record it on the database, note it in the accession register or write it on the object label. Use whatever method fits with your documentation process.

Whatever method you use, try to include the following information:

- What has been found - frass, holes, parts of the object falling off etc.
- If there were any insects, larvae or cast skins in association with the damage. Note how many there were, what species and if they were alive or dead. Alive = active infestation.
- Where the damage is on the object - front left leg, flower next to the phoenix etc.
- The date of the find.

Second step

Photograph the damage and any insects. Include a scale if possible and include the photograph with the object record as above.

Third step

Clean up any dead insects, frass etc and place them in a sealed bag for confirmatory ID or future reference. Continue to monitor the object if you are unsure if the damage is new or old.