



Site Selection Guide: Where Should Your Trap Go?

Once your Quest kit arrives, it's time to become an insect explorer! One of the most important steps in BugQuest is choosing the right place to set up your Malaise trap. Where you place your trap will affect what insects you collect, so take time to explore and choose wisely.

Quest Tip – Make sure you have all the proper permissions/collecting permits to set up the trap in the property you're considering (i.e. from landowners, site managers, etc.)

Before setting up, walk around your schoolyard or natural area and look for different habitats. You might be surprised by how many ecosystems are nearby! This is a great opportunity to observe nature, map habitats, and think about how people and wildlife share the environment – all important parts of your learning.

Accessibility: Easy to Reach, Safe to Stay

Your trap needs to be checked at least once a week, so choose a spot that is easy to access and safe to visit regularly. School grounds often work well, as long as the trap won't be in the way of sports, playground activities, or lawn maintenance.

Students are naturally curious, and interest in the trap is encouraged. However, consider the risk of accidental disturbance or vandalism. If this is a concern, an alternative secure location – such as a teacher's private property - may be used, as long as it meets program requirements.

Environment: Think Like an Insect

Now look closely at the habitat around your chosen spot. Insects are more active in certain areas, and your local knowledge will help you decide what's best. Great places for a Malaise trap include the edge of a wooded area, near a stream, or beside a school garden.

Your trap will work best when placed on flat ground with short plants around it. Tall grass or thick vegetation near the trap opening can block insects from flying in, which means fewer insects to study.

Trap positioning: Catching the Insect "Highway"

Insects often move along natural "flight pathways", such as open corridors in vegetation or animal trails. Invite students to look for these pathways and think about how insects travel through their environment.

Position the trap so that the middle panel blocks the flight path, guiding insects upward into the collection bottle. This hands-on setup helps students understand how the trap works and reinforces concepts related to animal movement and behaviour.

By thoughtfully selecting and positioning your Malaise trap, you will be working together to support meaningful data collection while building skills in observation, inquiry, and environmental stewardship.