

Where Should Your Trap Go?

Once your QuestKit 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 some time to explore and choose wisely.

Before setting up, walk around your community, 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.

Quest Tip

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



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. Ensure it will not be in the way of community activities or landscaping maintenance.

Community interest in the trap is a very important part of BugQuest. However, consider the risk of accidental disturbance or vandalism. If this is a concern, an alternative secure location — such as a participant's private property — may be used.

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 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.

Positioning: Catching the Insect Flight Pathway

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

Think about how you can place the trap so that the middle mesh panel blocks the flight path, guiding insects upward into the collection bottle. By carefully selecting your site and positioning your Malaise trap, you will be working together to support meaningful insect collection while building skills in observation, inquiry, and environmental stewardship.

