

RELAXING INSECTS. — I was much interested to read the note by P. J. Johnson (*Ent. Rec.*, 92:49) on this subject. I recollect reading elsewhere of the use of spirit as a relaxing agent but cannot at the moment recall the reference.

However the point on which I wish to comment concerns the prevention of mould. In my early days of collecting this presented a real and annoying problem when relaxing insects. I recollect that the addition of phenol was supposed to prevent mould in relaxing boxes. This I recall was not very effective. In the last few years I have developed a method which seems to prevent mould occurring in the relaxing box.

For purposes of relaxing insects, and I refer mainly to lepidoptera, I use a plastic box of suitable size with a more or less air-tight lid. In the bottom of the box is placed a thick layer of folded white lint. The charge consists mainly of water but to it is added about 25 ml of a super-saturated solution of Chlorocresol. (This is made up by adding chlorocresol to warm water until there is an excess of undissolved chemical.)

I found an old relaxing box recently, treated in this way over two years ago and containing a few butterflies which had not been set. Though the butterflies were completely water-logged there was no trace of mould whatever.

Chlorocresol is obtainable from the chemist's shop and while not very cheap a 100 gm bottle will charge many relaxing boxes. Once the relaxing boxes are charged it is only necessary from time to time to add a little more water as required — the chlorocresol remains for a long time. — Dr. NEVILLE L. BIRKETT, Kendal Wood, New Hutton, Cumbria LA8 0AQ.

SURGICAL SPIRIT AS A RELAXING AGENT. — With reference to Mr. Johnson's note under this heading (1980, *Ent. Rec.*, 92: 49), ordinary methylated spirits are equally suitable as a relaxing agent. I first drew attention to this in 1929 (*Entomologist*, 62:284), and repeated it in 1953 (*Ent. Rec.*, 65: 197). One point that Mr. Johnson does not mention is the rapidity with which spirit-relaxed specimens dry out; this results in great economies in the use of setting boards. — D. G. SEVASTOPULO, F.R.E.S., P.O. Box 95617, Mombasa (Nyali).

AQUATIC INSECTS. — Investigating a water-filled sandpit at Stone, Buckinghamshire, recently, some young companions and I discovered a variety of interesting insects. On 6th April, for example, 15-year old Ralph Woodward fished out an evil-smelling wooden post, within a fissure of which was the full-grown nymph of an Aeshnid dragonfly. In the same post were a large number of caddis larvae (*Phryganea* sp.), with black and yellow striped head and thorax. Later, in captivity, the *Aeshna* nymph seized and partially devoured one of the caddis, although the remainder of the latter were quite prepared to



Pfeiffer, Richard. 1981. "Relaxing insects." *The entomologist's record and journal of variation* 92, 227-227.

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