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A Use for a Throwaway

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A Use for a Throwaway

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A small vial or test tube plugged with cotton makes a very satisfactory watering device for caged insects. A significant drawback, however, is the difficulty in preventing the tube from rolling whenever the cage is moved. Setting the tube in a lump of clay is often suggested, but the clay soon becomes quite soiled.

A simple alternative can be fashioned from the corrugated foam commonly used in packing boxes of test tubes. This material can easily be cut to desired sizes, washed if necessary, and economically discarded if damaged. Chewing insects, such as crickets, eventually may riddle it with holes.

Sections of the foam packing can also be used at student laboratory stations to keep thermometers, glass tubing and other breakables from rolling off the table.

A Flannelboard Substitute

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A flannelboard is probably not among the audio-visual equipment available in most schools today, but there are times when this old standby is quite useful. For example, I find it (or my substitute) indispensable in explaining step-by-step processes in such phenomena as food chains, natural cycles, life cycles and chemical reactions.

A satisfactory substitute can be prepared utilizing the chalkboard, photos or diagrams making up the elements of the presentation, and a reusable putty-like adhesive (Plasti-Tak is one such product). Place a quantity of the adhesive on the back of the visual, and press hard to stick it to the chalkboard as you make your presentation. Arrows, labels, and other elements can be added with chalk as desired.

A note of caution: the adhesive will leave an oily spot on some surfaces. You may want to test it in an inconspicuous place first.

NSTS Announcement

Dr. William C. Kyle, Jr. has been appointed NSTA State Membership Coordinator for the State of Iowa. If you are interested in obtaining information about NSTA and its membership services, contact: Dr. William Kyle, Jr., Science Education Center, Physics Building, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242.