



HOME DEMO NO. 25

A Slice of Apple Fly

If you study insects you're called an entomologist. You can learn a lot about insects, like how their bodies work, how long they live and what they eat. One way to collect insects is by using a simple gadget called a Berlese Funnel. Another way is to use a complicated scientific instrument called a Slice of Apple. Hmm.

Let's see if fruit is the apple of fruit flies' eyes or smell sense!

What you need:

1. A slice of apple
2. A big glass jar or plastic container
3. A big plastic funnel
4. A paper towel
5. A piece of scrap paper
6. A rubber band

What you do:

1. Put your Slice of Apple in the jar and set the funnel in the top.
2. Set your experiment outside and leave it alone for a few hours.
3. When you have about eight fruit flies in your jar, remove the funnel, drop in the scrap of paper, and loosely plug the top of the jar with your ball of cotton.

What's happening?

Look carefully at your fruit flies. You may notice that they don't all look exactly alike. Male fruit flies are smaller than females, and have a black tip at the end of their bodies. If you have males and females in your jar, you'll be able to watch them reproduce. The females will deposit eggs, and in a few days they will hatch. Baby fruit flies look like worms. These worms are called larvae (LAR-vee). Aren't they adorable? When the larvae have finished growing, they turn into pupa (PYOO-puh). The paper is in the jar for the larvae to crawl onto before they turn into pupa.

Don't panic if your pupa doesn't move around a lot. They are not dead! They are busy transforming into adult fruit flies. Wait, you'll see! Fruit flies are great for entomologists to study because they reproduce quickly. The whole process takes about two and a half weeks. Pretty soon you'll have a huge family of fruit flies. But make sure they don't take over your family -- take them outside when you release them!