
COLLECTING AND LOOKING AT ZOOPLANKTON

While plankton nets can be purchased, you can make a serviceable net from a heavy coat hanger, a sturdy pair of pantyhose and some nylon rope. Bend the coat hanger into a circle. Tie three 3-ft pieces of nylon rope or heavy cord to the rim using strong knots. Stretch the waistband of the pantyhose over the wire and sew it to the wire with sturdy thread. Distribute the rope evenly as you go so that the three ropes are equal distance from each other. Fold the band over the wire as you sew for a strong attachment and to avoid runs. Pull the ropes evenly and make an overhand knot in the ends. Use small spice or baby food jars inside the legs about knee level to collect the plankton. Hold them in place with heavy rubber bands. Pull the net with a rope. Attach a weight to the wire for a deeper tow.

Zooplankton can be viewed by the entire class with the deep well projection slides available from Carolina Biological Supply. They are dropped into a 35-mm slide projector. The zooplankton appear to swim around on the screen. These small plastic slides are somewhat expensive, but can be washed and reused. In 1995 the Carolina Biological catalog deep well projection slides are item no. 60-3730. They are sold in sheets of 20 for \$44.93.