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Daphnia

Daphnia are members of the Phylum Arthropoda, Class Crustacea, Sub-order Cladocera. They are commonly known as ‘water fleas’.

Immediately upon receiving your culture, loosen the lid of the container to allow air to circulate whilst preventing contaminants entering.

Many methods have been suggested by biologists for the culture of Daphnia including culturing in duck manure extracts, yeast solutions, and in bacterial suspensions. None of these methods have proved entirely satisfactory in our own laboratory and it is for this reason that we make the following suggestions.

1. We have found that Daphnia tend to survive best if they are kept cool at around 5-10°C. It is important that they remain in the water that they came to you in as any transfer, or change, can cause sudden deaths. To achieve the best conditions we recommend that you loosen the lid to allow air into the culture and then either place the container in the coolest place that you have, or suspend the culture in a water bath to try to keep the temperature favourable. Do not place the culture in the fridge.

The expected life span of the culture is 2 or 3 days.

2. Examine the Daphnia by transferring a specimen to a cavity slide using a wide mouth pasteur pipette. The eye, intestinal tract and egg cases should be readily visible, as is the heart, located on the dorsal side of the intestinal tract.
3. After using a portion of the culture for your class, you may wish to try to culture the balance of the organisms. Whilst you may try some of the methods mentioned above, we suggest you place the organisms in a small aquarium containing elodea or other aquatic plants. Do not include fish or hydra as these will eat the daphnia. If you are extremely fortunate the daphnia may survive and multiply, but this multiplication cycle fluctuates rapidly with organisms appearing in moderate numbers at some times and being non-existent at other times. They are amongst the most difficult of all organisms to maintain in artificial culture in the classroom.

Catalogue Code: L 3.60



Supporting Products for Daphnia:

Books

Code: BK50.86 Guide to Microlife

Code: BK 54.10 Freshwater Invertebrates

Code: BK 54.13 Australian Guide to Pond Life

Posters

Code: WC33 Pond II, Larger Microlife

Video Programmes

Code: VP 2.42 Small Life of Ponds and Wetlands

Prepared Microscope Slide

Code: PMS 20.10 Daphnia

Cavity Slides. Code : M 7.16

DeepWell Slides

Code: M 7.70

Plastic Pipettes. Code: G 10.73

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