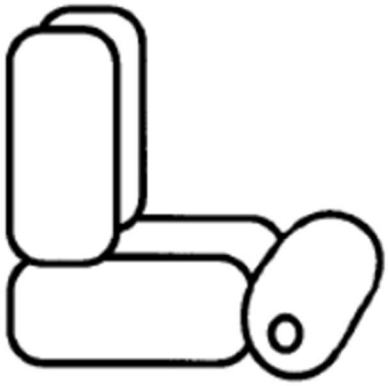
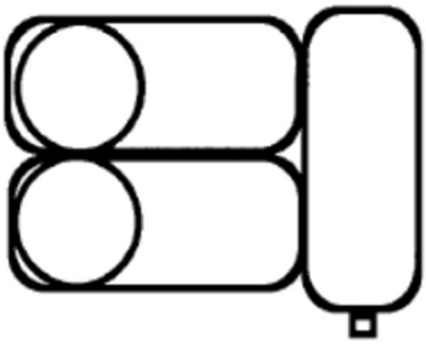
Building the Basic 5-Bottle

The 5-bottle condo is the basic unit. Once you learn how to construct the 5-bottle condo, you can add on more bottles to form the 9, 10 and 18-bottle condos.

Side View



Top View

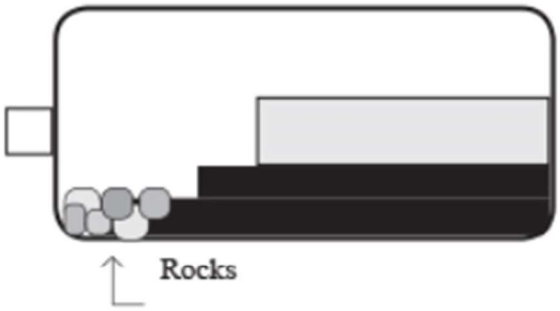


Crickets

Setting up the condo according to the diagram will offer the crickets a fine place to live. Add some dry dog food in a lid from a jar (or see the next page) along with plenty of dry leaves and the crickets should be quite comfortable.

If the conditions are right for reproduction, students can observe the entire life cycle of a cricket from egg to nymph to adult in about 2-4 months. The adult crickets will insert their ovipositor into the moist soil and lay one egg at a time. The eggs hatch in 3-4 weeks, and a nymph will emerge which slowly grows and sheds the old exoskeleton for a new one. Newly hatched crickets are quite small and may crawl through air holes. Cover any holes with women's nylon stockings or panty hose to keep the crickets contained. As the nymphs grow into adults, the males will chirp by rubbing one wing against the folded underside of the other wing.

Crickets are also cold-blooded; a heating source will increase their activity. 30 - 35 degrees Centigrade (86 - 95 degrees F) is suggested for best reproduction results. You can estimate the air temperature in degrees Fahrenheit by counting the number of chirps in 15 seconds and adding 40.



(Note: This setup works extremely well in a 10-gallon aquarium.)

Feeding Tubes For Crickets

Crickets will eat dog food. It's very important to keep the dog food dry so that mold or fungus doesn't grow on it, as this seems to kill crickets quite fast.

To keep the dog food dry, obtain some empty syringe containers from a veterinarian. Cut some notches into the tube. Then melt an appropriate sized hole into the side of the condo bottle, insert the feeding tube and seal with a bead of silicon glue. To add more dog food, take the cap off the syringe container, add dog food and replace the cap.

Other syringe containers might serve as useful water troughs.