

# Dream Jobs: Entomologist (bug scientist)

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An entomologist prepares moths caught at night in Yonne, France. Photo by: Matthieu Gauvain/Wikimedia.

Dino Martins is an entomologist. Entomologists are people who study bugs. Martins also studies pollinators, which are animals, objects or forces such as wind that move pollen. Pollen is a powder found in plants that is needed for seeds to grow.

Most of Martins' work is based on bees and other insects. They are responsible for pollinating plants from almonds to zucchini. "Insects are the invisible, behind-the-scenes workers that keep the planet going," Martins said.

## Early Work

Martins grew up in a farming town in Kenya, which is a country in Africa. There were plenty of bugs around him. He said that his "earliest memories are of insects." He would see hundreds of brightly colored butterflies rise up after drinking from streams.

Martins' family didn't have a television, so watching insects became his after-school entertainment. Praying mantises, ants and butterflies were some of the first insects he studied.

Some of the insects Martins wanted to bring home, like scorpions, were dangerous. Others were found on dead animals. Still, his parents were happy about his passion for bugs and the outdoors.

In high



school, Martins volunteered with the National Museums of Kenya. This is a government group that manages museums in Kenya and helps the study of nature, art and culture. While he was there, Martins worked with insects, of course. Later, Martins went to the United States to study at Harvard University.



### **How Do You Define Geography?**

Geography is the study of land, but Martins said that it is also more complicated than that. "It's everything in the world that allows bugs to be interesting.... Geography is everything that makes a good place for a bug to live."

### **Geo-Connection**

Martins uses geography before, during and after his work in the field. Before even going out, he looks at maps of the area he's interested in. Different types of land lead to certain plants, and the plants lead to certain bugs. For example, most desert plants are low-growing, with small flowers close to the ground. Hills and rocks, on the other hand, have more spaces for plants to grow, leading to larger stems and flowers.

In the field, Martins uses geographic tools such as GPS. This tool keeps track of where he is. When Martins catches an insect, he places it in a cool box. He puts a harmless colored dot on the bug, with a number to keep track of it. He notes the GPS location of where it was caught, then lets it go. He might come across the same bug somewhere else in the area, and then he records that location, too.

Entomologists also create maps of the various plants and pollinators they find in an area. "The maps help tell us how bees and flowers need each other." Martins won't run out of work anytime soon. Most plants that make flowers are pollinated by bees. There are more than 300,000 flowering plants in the world.

Martins and other entomologists use geography to help find new types of insects. It doesn't always take them where they expect. Most kinds of insects live in tropical rain forests, but bees like hot and dry places like deserts.

### **So You Want To Be An Entomologist**

"It's a lot of fun, but also a lot of hard work," Martins says. Anyone can do it if they are patient and love the job.

Martins offers an example of the patience he needs sometimes. He and a student were looking for a new kind of bee. It was 114 degrees Fahrenheit in the desert, and they sat there for eight hours. This is hotter than having a fever.

### **Get Involved**

Martins says families should visit museums and butterfly gardens. He also says just looking around is important. "No one is ever far from an insect. There's no excuse to be bored. Insects are all around you."



## Quiz

- 1 What effect do bees have on flowering plants?
- (A) They keep them from growing in the desert.  
(B) They take all of their pollen so they can't reproduce.  
(C) They allow them to stay alive and reproduce.  
(D) They make it hard for other plants to get pollen.
- 2 According to the section "So You Want To Be An Entomologist," HOW can an entomologist's job be challenging?
- (A) They sometimes have to work hard without having fun.  
(B) They sometimes have to spend the night in cold places.  
(C) They sometimes have to work with young students.  
(D) They sometimes have to wait a long time to find a bug.
- 3 The word "geography" is essential to understanding where bees are located.  
Which sentence from the article BEST explains what "geography" means?
- (A) Geography is the study of land, but Martins said that it is also more complicated than that.  
(B) "It's everything in the world that allows bugs to be interesting.... Geography is everything that makes a good place for a bug to live."  
(C) Martins uses geography before, during and after his work in the field.  
(D) Before even going out, he looks at maps of the area he's interested in.
- 4 Read the paragraph from the introduction [paragraphs 1-2].
- Dino Martins is an entomologist. Entomologists are people who study bugs. Martins also studies pollinators, which are animals, objects or forces such as wind that move pollen. Pollen is a powder found in plants that is needed for seeds to grow.*
- Which phrase from the selection helps you understand the meaning of "pollinators"?
- (A) people who study bugs  
(B) forces such as wind  
(C) that move pollen  
(D) powder found in plants