



The Study of Spiders

Week 5: In the Lab

Small Specimens

Vlad: As a rule, we keep spider collections in two ways. One way is to keep spiders in a large jar. For example, there are jars inside of jars, and we have separate vials. Each vial has a spider. Why do we keep our collection in this way? Because alcohol easily evaporates from the separate vials. It is very easy to see the level of alcohol in a large jar, so if the alcohol in the jar evaporates, we can add alcohol. Practically every year we check all the jars in our cabinets and add some alcohol.

The second way we keep spiders in our collection is each spider is stored in a separate vial. A label on each vial identifies that spider. It is very

difficult to check all these vials because we have thousands and thousands of vials. A technician checks each vial for its alcohol level. If the alcohol in a vial has evaporated and the spider has dried out, the spider loses its value for our research.