



How to pitfall trap on your farm

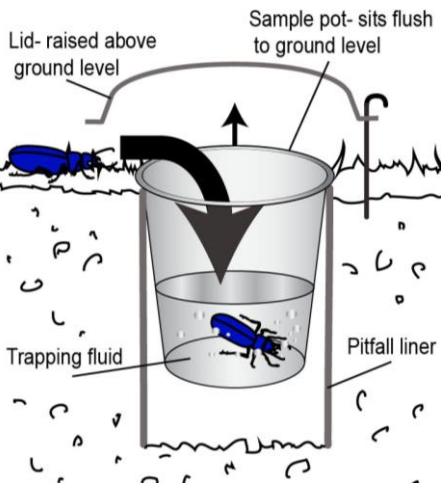
What do I need?

- A container- A Jam jar or pint glass will do, glass or plastic
- A lid- A plant pot saucer is ideal, but any flat object, with sticks to sit on
- Fluid- ethanol is ideal, but unscented detergent with water will do



Where do I put the traps?

Depends on how much time you have and what you want to find out. To start, it may be good to have one in a management feature, such as field margin, and one in the adjacent crop. This way you can see if the beetles are moving between the two. Mark them with a cane to find them again!



How do I set them up?

- Dig a hole and set the container so that the lip is level with the soil surface- you can use sand to level the ground if you wish
- To make it easier to reset you can have a liner- a tube or second container to sit in
- Fill with the trapping fluid (you need to kill the beetles or they will eat each other). Ethanol you can mix 70:30 with water. If you only have detergent, add 2 drops to a litre. Fill the container to a depth of 4-5cm (1.5- 2 inch)
- Set the lid raised 2-3cm (1 inch) above the soil surface- to protect from animals and the weather

When do I collect them?

You can run from one overnight trap to 14 days, dependant on the beetle activity. It is wise to have a test trap, then choose. It is best to stick to a standard period of time after that, so you can compare your samples over time.



How do I process the samples?

This depends on what level you want to go to. You can simply count the carabid beetles you have, or take back to the farm/office to identify to genus or species- so you know what predators you have! Some dishes, a hand magnifying lens and tweezers are useful. ID guides are available as books, websites, field guides, or even phone apps!

How often should I run traps?

Insect numbers do vary a lot with weather, time of year, and resources available. So the more samples you have, the more accurate your conclusions are likely to be. However, knowing a little is better than nothing- so even once is good. A good medium could be two trap occasions in spring and autumn, to catch the main carabid activity peaks.