

Spider Mite Removal

Here is a photo showing before and after views of the only spider I ever put in the fridge, to immobilize it for mite removal under a microscope. Taken through a low power microscope, the image on the left shows a small spider I found with two spider mites attached. The pic on the right was taken after I spent about 5 minutes removing them. I was able to immobilize the spider by chilling it first in a refrigerator, then under the microscope (which had good working distance), gently pinning four legs to a glass slide using Scotch Tape and whiskers shed by my two cats. Small pieces of tape held a whisker flat against the slide, then the thin end was lifted and a spider leg slid underneath. This held the leg firmly but gently. With just four legs secured I could then work on the mites without the spider moving around. I had to come up with a tool fine enough to enable removing the mites without harming the spider. The thin end of a cat whisker is extremely delicate and very flexible. Putting the thicker end of the whisker into the split end of a toothpick (used as a handle), makes a very handy tool that's useful for performing a number of tasks where fine precision is required. Using one of these home-made tools, the mites were gently worked loose and the spider released a few days later after several photo sessions.

