

Do As I Say, Not As I Do
A Light-hearted Look at a Not So Scientific Practice

I'll remember what that is!" No more untrue words were ever spoken. When I taught high school science, I made my students label everything, including drawings, samples, notes, journal pages, and more. Whatever it was, it had to be identifiable by their name as the scientist, the date, the time it was collected, drawn, or described, the weather conditions if outdoors, and the location where the observation occurred or the sample was collected.

You would think I would follow my own advice, wouldn't you? Nope, I am a perfect example of "Do as I say, not as I do."

Most of the time, I have a good idea of what is in those jars or envelopes. Take, for example, this Caddis fly case. I know it came from Spring Creek.



I could find the date and time I collected it by going through back issues of this publication.



I could do the same with this mollusk, which I still haven't identified. I do recall that it also came from Spring Creek.



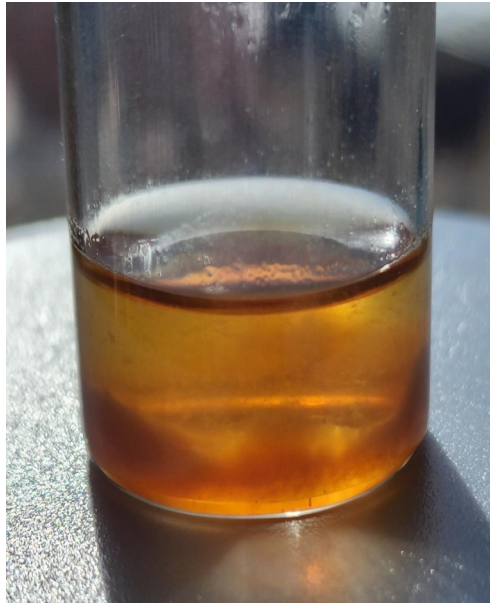
I have no idea where this sample came from. It looks promising though! I am sure there is good stuff in it.



I do know these cockleburs (g. *Xanthium*) came from the Gray Reef Campground, on the North Platte River southwest of Casper, Wyoming, U.S.A. That is about all I could tell you. As an aside – my sister-in-law saves her contact lens containers for me. They make great collection vials for small samples.

I am saving the best for last, however. It is the sample that triggered the idea for this article. This sample has convinced me that at least I need to carry a Sharpie® Permanent Marker in my pack. I have added a pocket notebook and a pencil, too.

I am very curious about what this is, and where it came from. It forms slime-type layers. It does not have an odor. It was most likely an outdoor find.



I will play around with this, and do some slides in hopes of identifying it. Meanwhile, any and all guesses are welcome! And again...do as I say, not as I do!
by Jennie Lawrence

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All photos by the author.

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