

Medicolegal forensic entomology uses insect evidence to establish the Time of Colonization Interval (TOC), often used in inferring time of death. However, TOC can also provide other forensically relevant events, such as the minimum time of neglect, or time since environmental exposure. These timelines can serve as a tool in reconstruction and is integral to forensic investigations. However, utilizing entomological evidence requires the expertise of a forensic entomologist. With only 23 board certified Forensic Entomologists recognized by the American Board of Forensic Entomology, evidence will likely need to be shipped to a practitioner, often out of state. Veterinarians and crime scene technicians are often the first to interact with insect evidence, and carry a heavy burden in triaging insect evidence for the practitioner. Improper collection or shipping can damage specimens or compromise data, reducing the evidentiary value of the insects and limiting the ability to establish accurate timelines. Therefore, well trained practitioners responsible for the documentation and collection of insect evidence can greatly improve entomological reports.

By the conclusion of the workshop, attendees will be able to incorporate insect evidence into casework at its full potential when working alongside an entomologist. Additionally, they will be prepared to train colleagues within their agencies on proper scene-level insect evidence collection, ultimately improving the precision and reliability of forensic timelines in their investigations.

1. Foundations of Forensic Entomology (1 hour)
2. Recognizing and Documenting Insect Evidence (1 hour)
3. Break (10 minutes)
4. Collection Techniques (1 hour)
5. Special Contexts and Considerations (30 min)
6. Proper Shipping of Evidence (20 minutes)

Dr. Samantha J. Sawyer, PhD, M-ABFE, is a board-certified forensic entomologist under the American Board of Forensic Entomology and Assistant Professor of Forensic Sciences in the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Science at the University of New Haven. She leads the D.E.A.T.H. Ecology Lab and has consulted on death, neglect, and abuse cases since 2017. Dr. Sawyer has delivered online and in-person workshops on insect documentation, collection, and shipment for veterinarians and local, state, and federal law enforcement. Her research focuses on decomposition ecology, medicolegal and environmental forensic entomology.