

## Rearing Insects from Plant Material

We reared all our bruchids and chalcids by placing dry fruit pods into sandwich-sized re-sealable bags and monitoring them. Blowing a little air into the bag so that it is inflated makes it easier to observe the contents without mashing any insects that have emerged. Students can check the bags for any new emergences as part of their warm-up routine. Bruchids emerged almost daily in the fall as soon as the fruits turned brown. They were accompanied by the two species of chalcid wasp shown in Figure 6. Nothing much happened through the winter, but two additional species of wasp emerged in the spring. This type of insect rearing project takes almost no effort and can be used with any number of plants. Additionally, this topic can be linked to a number of Disciplinary Core Ideas, especially Natural Selection and Evolution. The co-evolution of plant and animal interactions is a fascinating subject, the results of which your students can observe in their own backyards.