Making a jam jar aquarium

If a large glass tank is not available, practically any glass vessel can be used as a simple aquarium if it is well stocked with submerged water plants such as Elodea or Myriophyllum, to aerate the water. A 1 kg jam jar is quite suitable for keeping caddis larvae, pond snails, small crustacea, and plants such as Elodea and Lemna minor, and will keep in properly balanced condition for months if carefully stocked. It is as bad to understock as it is to overstock. The aquarium should require no attention, but if a Dytiscus or other predaceous larva is kept it should be fed regularly on tadpoles. Three centimetres of clean sand will provide hibernating quarters for the caddises at the bottom of the jar, and a muslin cover will ensure that the caddis flies do not escape unobserved.

A diary should be kept, to record egg laying and other changes, as well as habits. Such an aquarium can be made the basis for a simple study of the interrelationship between plants and animals in pond life.

For collecting pond and stream specimens a strong net can be made from a soup strainer if one is available. Its handle should be firmly bound to a stick, the tape being threaded through the handle repeatedly. The tape must be liberally smeared with rubber solution if available, and then tied tightly and the knot smeared too.