

Dissect samples either dry or in 100 percent ethanol.

Wash sample 3 x 10 minutes in 100 percent ethanol, then let sample sit overnight (or longer) in ethanol.

Take sample to SEM facility, where they will dry it to the critical point. (They don't let us do this dehydration step.)

~90 - 120 minutes after the drying started, return to SEM facility to mount sample on pedestal. Label the bottom of the pedestal using a small sharpie and holding the stand with specialized forceps. Using the small wooden dowels provided, paint the pedestal with thick coat of silver conductive paint. Carefully place your sample on the paint and make sure there is a smooth transition between the sample and the paint. The sample must then dry overnight -- return later to spray it with gold and image it.

Gold sputtering --

(There is an instruction sheet next to the gold sputtering machine, but in short -- place samples inside the gold sputter machine and turn the power on. Wait until the vacuum reaches the point indicated by a line on the gauge. Press the "cycle" button, wait for cycle to complete and for the pressure to return to set point in container before cycling two more times. Use a paper towel to wipe off inside of the glass cylinder when you're done. You can go straight from the gold sputter step to SEM imaging.)