A simplified method for monitoring results of food intake

It can sometimes prove difficult to see if the target group of invertebrates have been feeding and also the amount they have eaten when you are developing new feeds.

This method may be of assistance for monitoring the food intake for various species.

Ice lolly sticks, new or reused, made of beech, are very suitable to use as they are very light coloured, making it easy to see if the food has been eaten.

In this trial, a moist algae-based mix for various species of Isopoda was tested.

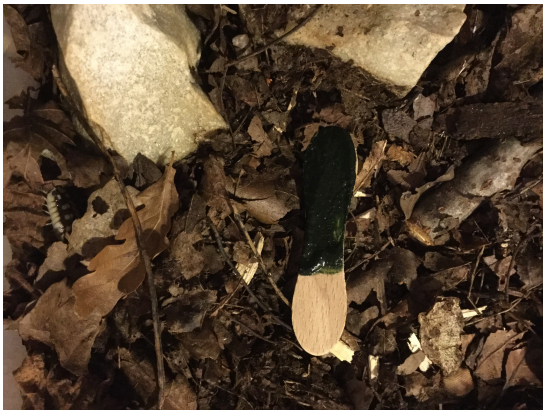
The mix is prepared by adding enough water to make it easy to apply to the sticks.
It should be moist but not too wet as it should stick to the ice lolly sticks without running off.

By soaking the ice lolly sticks in water for 5 - 10 minutes, the mix will stay moist longer, instead of water being removed from the actual mix which will make it dry too quickly. Some species prefer the moist food to drier mixes.

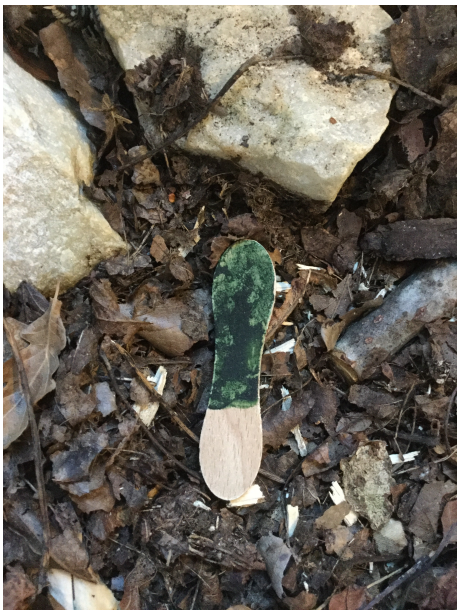
A thin, evenly spread layer of the mix, is applied to the sticks, leaving a part of the stick uncovered. By leaving a distinct edge where the mix ends, makes it easier to see any alteration.

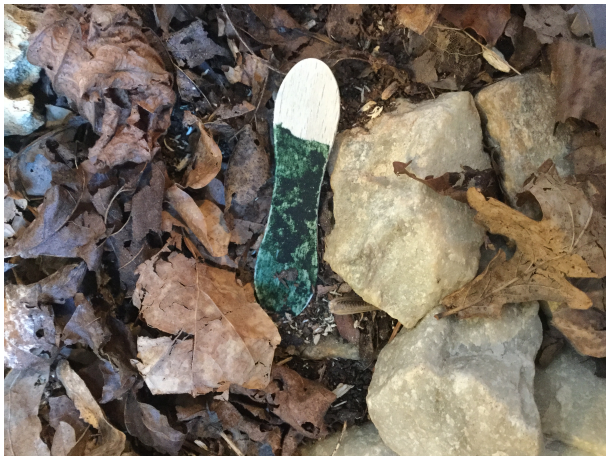
The sticks are then placed into the target group's enclosure and left over night.

In this case, *Porcellio expansus* (left) and *Porcellio bolivari* (right).



This is how it looks the day after:





As you can see from the photos above (left and right), it is now clearly visible that both species have fed and the amount of food that has been eaten.

Using this method, it is possible not only to detect feeding, but also the amount of food being consumed.

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