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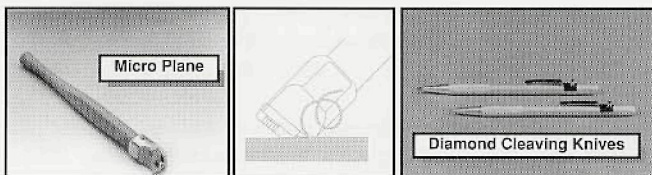
**Sample Preparation Tools for Microscopy**

The **Micro Plane** tools are very useful sample preparation items for any microscopy laboratory. This tool allows the user to plane or scrape the surface of a solid material and produce a uniform thickness slice. An adjustable screw allows the user to vary the thickness of the slice. The carbide-steel blade version is useful for planing thin sections from most polymers, tissue samples and coated materials. The diamond hardened-edge version produces a slice with a very clean and smooth edge. It is ideal for cutting hard polymers, multilayer materials and scraping metal surfaces. The Single Crystal Diamond version of the Micro Plane is useful for cutting very hard polymers, inorganic materials and coatings from metallic surfaces. The Single Crystal Diamond Micro Plane will produce the cleanest, most uniform thin films and is especially useful for cutting multilayer polymers.

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**An Effective, Cost-Free Holder/Desiccator for Storage of SEM Stubs**

Glenn Walker and Jerry Hartenburg, Eastern Michigan University, and Chris Edwards, University of Michigan

Two of the aggravations of effectively managing an EM unit are cost containment and effective storage of large numbers of specimens. For the past several years we have enjoyed the benefits of a stub-storage box (for pin-type stubs) available to microscopists without cost. These boxes, which held micro-pipette tips, are regularly discarded by molecular biology and biochemistry labs. In fact, since colleagues have recognized that we use their spent plastic boxes, we have been inundated with boxes originally slated for recycling. While several types of these boxes are available, most measure approximately twelve cm by eight cm and have a plastic platform with ninety-six holes. The boxes hold eight one-inch stubs and six half-inch stubs or thirty-two half-inch stubs. These contrast with commercially available specimen mount holders which accommodate either four or twelve half-inch stubs and cost at least a couple of dollars each. We find, since availability of the holders is not limiting, that the boxes which are fitted with a removable bottom are preferable to those with a solidly molded casing. We gain easy access to the bottom of these boxes and either insert a packet of 'Drierite' wrapped in tissue to prevent the escape of dust or pour in silicon desiccation beads. Unlike the commercially available holders, these boxes provide a desiccated environment, are available at no cost and accommodate a large number of specimen holders. Our students and faculty are no longer inconvenienced by a variety of stub-holding options such as drilling holes in wood or punching holes in cardboard and storing these holders in assorted containers with a desiccant. Further, specimen shelving allows large numbers of stubs to be easily and efficiently stored in these like-sized boxes.

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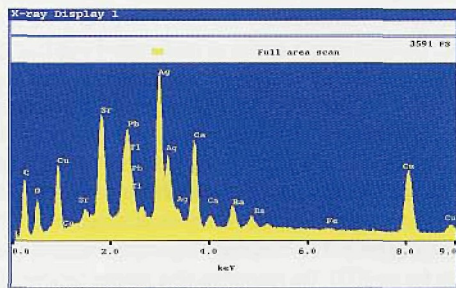
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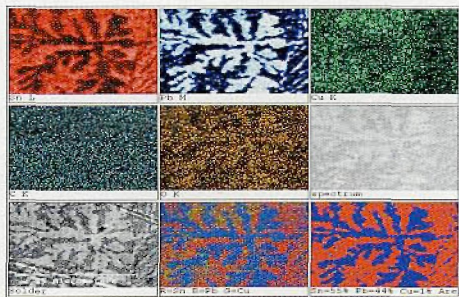
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