

A Guide to Stamp Collecting Supplies

Stamp collecting is a hobby which is loved worldwide. In the United States alone, there is an estimated 20 million stamp collectors. It is a long tradition that has continued and will continue to exist.

Why is stamp collecting so popular? It is a hobby that doesn't need many expensive tools or equipments. However, there are some basic tools that a collector must have to be able to further enjoy collecting and preserve the stamp in good condition. These tools are usually inexpensive and can be purchased easily. Here are some of the supplies for stamp collecting:

Albums

These albums are very significant in the whole stamp collecting hobby because it secures the stamps and allow the collector to be able to organize the stamp collection and at the same time display them in an attention-grabbing way.

One must be able to know what kind of albums to use for his stamp collection. A good stamp album would have thick pages which can hold a lot of handling and stress. It must also have ample space for the stamps so as not to get them too crowded. The binding of the album must be sturdy and strong to hold the pages more effectively. Last, but not the least, the pages must be acid-free.

Mounts and Hinges

The small rectangular pieces of gum-coated paper or glassine are called stamp hinges. They are used to attach the stamps to the pages of the stamp album. They work like ordinary door or cabinet hinges. These hinges do not cost very much. In fact, one can purchase a thousand of them while spending only a few dollars.

Another tool can be used to attach the stamp into the stamp album pages, this is the stamp mount. Unlike stamp hinges, stamp mounts do not damage the gum of the stamp. Mounts have sleeves where the stamps are inserted, therefore eliminating the need to attach the stamp to a gum-coated hinge. These mounts costs more than the stamp hinges and are usually used to hold the more expensive kinds of stamps.

Tongs

These are comparable to ordinary tweezers. These tongs are usually made from plastic or stainless steel. They are used for handling the stamp to prevent damaging it. Using tongs for expensive stamps is a must because a simple touch

can destroy or decrease the value of a stamp.

Magnifying glass

In collecting stamps, one of the greatest thrills is examining the items. A magnifying glass is needed in order to effectively assess the stamp at hand. This will allow a collector to spot certain tears, damages or errors on stamps.

Envelopes

Thin translucent envelopes made of glassine come in different sized and are used for storing and sorting the stamps before they are placed in the stamp album. These can also be useful in mailing the stamps to other people.

Watermark Detector

This will allow a collector to see the embossed pattern that was printed on the stamp which indicates the time when the stamp was made. Although not all stamps are embossed with watermarks, having a watermark detector sure is handy.

Catalogs

These are good references for one to be able to assess the value of his stamps. Usually, these catalogs give some useful information or interesting facts about certain stamps which they feature.

The world of stamp collecting is an exciting and wonderful one. Stamps tell the story of the world and its history. Having the proper stamp collecting supplies can make the whole experience of stamp collecting more intense and fun.