

Heart Dissection Lab

We started our heart dissection lab by taking a deer heart out of the freezer and getting all our tools ready. Before we even began dissecting it, we took a look at the outside anatomy of the heart, finding the arteries and veins. It was interesting to see how big veins and arteries are in your heart, because I'd always imagined them as being quite small and they're actually big enough to stick your finger in.

Anyway, after examining the heart, we began to cut into it. We started with what we thought was the right ventricle, but turned out to be the left ventricle, based on a diagram of the human heart. Maybe we got it the wrong way around, or deer have different hearts to us. I took a scalpel and made an incision into the muscle, stopping when I reached the left ventricle. From there, we could see the bicuspid valve, which led up into the left atrium, and I stuck my finger in to see if I could stick it out the aorta (I could, as you can see from our photos). The tendons holding the valve are really very stringy, as you can see.

After that, we realized that we weren't in the right ventricle, and turned the heart around so we could get into it. Here we found the tricuspid valve (so named because of the three flaps of the valve), and the pulmonary (semilunar) valve. The heart was quite a mess by the end, and I was glad I'd worn gloves. All in all, I feel that this lab project helped me to see the basic parts of the heart from a new perspective, and to understand how hard it is to dissect cleanly!