

HOME ACTIVITY SHEET:

HOW TO MAKE A BUG HOTEL



When and Where to Build

A bug hotel can be built at any time of year. The site of your hotel should be level and the ground must be firm. Make sure it is a good distance away from any vegetable beds.

How To Make Your Own Bug Hotel

1. You need a strong, stable framework, no more than 1 metre high. Old wooden pallets are perfect as they're sturdy and come with ready-made gaps, but you could improvise by using something as small as an old flowerpot or wooden box as your container, depending on what you have available. As long as it's reasonably weatherproof, it's fine!
2. Ensure that you have a ventilation space at under the bug hotel to stop it from soaking up too much moisture from the ground.
3. If you're using palettes, you could lay bricks (the ones with holes in them) on the ground as a sturdy base, especially at the corners, leaving spaces in between some of the bricks (for ventilation and to provide entrances for animals). Then add 3 or 4 layers of wooden pallets on top of the bricks. But if you don't have palettes

or bricks (and during the Covid-19 lockdown, it's unlikely you'll have them lying around!), then as noted above, an old flowerpot or wooden box would be fine. You could raise it off the ground using a few stones or thick twigs.

4. Whatever type of framework you're using, you now need to fill the gaps inside it, making sure you provide lots of different nooks and crannies, crevices, tunnels and cosy beds. Here are some ideas of how natural materials can be used:
 - Dead wood and loose bark - homes for beetles, centipedes, spiders and woodlice
 - Hollow bamboo canes, dead hollow stems cut from shrubs and herbaceous plants and drilled logs - provide holes and small tubes for solitary bees
 - Stones, tiles and old terracotta pots - provide larger holes and the cool, damp conditions preferred by frogs and toads
 - Dry leaves, sticks and straw - homes for ladybirds, other beetles and bugs
 - Corrugated cardboard - for lacewings
 - Pine cones - provide small crevices for minibeasts to hide and nest in
 - Dry leaves - help mimic a natural forest floor
4. Add a roof to keep your bug house relatively dry. You could use old roof tiles or old planks covered with roofing felt, or even some old plastic sheeting, but make sure it's weighted down so it doesn't blow away.
5. If you can, surround your bug hotel with nectar-rich flowers - essential food for butterflies, bees and other pollinating insects.
6. Think of a name for your bug hotel and create a sign for it.

