

RHS Campaign for School Gardening



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Making a Bug Hotel

All kinds of mini-beasts can benefit from these varied shelters made from recycled materials



Bug hotel constructed by Eastwick Infant School, Bookham

Why do bugs need hotels?

In natural habitats there are endless nooks and crannies where mini-beasts, properly known as invertebrates, can shelter. Cracks in bark, holes in dead wood, piles of fallen leaves, gaps between rocks, hollow plant stems, spaces in dead logs – all these can provide a home for the myriad small creatures that need somewhere to nest or to escape from predators or bad weather. Established gardens can also provide lots of hiding places, but gardeners often like to tidy away the debris where invertebrates might live. Schools may feel pressure to keep their plots tidy and in a new garden, or one that consists of containers surrounded by hard surfaces, the amount of natural cover will be limited. We can help provide more homes by creating bug hotels, which are often interesting and attractive creations in their own right.



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What makes a good bug hotel?

The best bug hotels have lots of small spaces in different shapes and sizes and made from different materials. Ideally some should be nice and dry inside, and others a bit dampish. Bug hotels are generally made from reclaimed materials, or natural objects, which reduces cost, helps them blend in with their surroundings and is probably more attractive to the mini-beast guests.



Bug hotel constructed by Costessey High School, Norwich

How do you make a bug hotel?

A simple bug hotel can be made from a collection of hollow stems packed into a plastic bottle with the end cut off. Several hotels could be placed in different positions such as on the ground amongst vegetation, fixed on top of a post, next to a wall, half way up a hedge, in a tree, under a bird table. These are likely to attract different mini-beasts to live in them.

Grander bug hotels can be made by piling up a variety of materials into a tower, or making a wooden frame with a series of compartments and packing these with different fillings. A variety of designs are shown in this leaflet.

What might check in to your bug hotel?

A surprisingly wide variety of invertebrates including nesting mason bees and leaf cutter bees, woodlice hiding from the sun – and woodlice spiders hunting woodlice, earwigs hiding their babies from predators, ladybirds and lacewings hibernating over winter, beetle larvae feeding on the dead wood, funnel web spiders spinning their traps and centipedes hunting down their prey.



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Bug hotel constructed for a school by Everthorpe Prison



Bug hotel constructed by Alton Primary School

