

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Making a bug hotel

Bug hotels can be made at any time of year, but there are usually plenty of suitable materials in autumn and this is also a time when many creatures are looking for cosy places to spend the winter.

Learning aims

- Caring for living things
- Finding information from sources such as books and the internet
- Develop an awareness of changing seasons
- Notice minibeasts, begin to be able to name them and describe some of their characteristics (such as legs, wings, body).



Resources

- Non-fiction books about insects and other minibeasts
- Access to the internet to search for images and information
- Bricks (preferably ones with holes), wooden boxes, pallets
- Dry twigs, leaves, hollow stems, dead grass, pine cones, bark, dry bamboo
- Terracotta plant pots, pebbles, shells.

Activity outline

1. Find out from the children what they already know about insects and other minibeasts. Use non-fiction books and the internet to search for any that they know. Discuss the idea that insects and other minibeasts need safe spaces to shelter, especially as the weather becomes colder and wetter during autumn
2. Share the resources gathered with the children and explain how they are going to be used to create a 'bug hotel' where the insects will be able to shelter. Name the items and encourage the children to think about how they could be used to create cosy spaces for the bugs
3. Arrange the wooden boxes or pallets on a sheltered, flat area which will be out of direct sunlight. Ensure that they are not likely to tip over by fixing them to fences or walls
4. Talk to the children about how to divide the area inside the box or pallet and add the bricks and plant pots. Lie the plant pots down so that the open end faces out
5. Encourage children to gather one resource at a time and choose where to add it to the hotel. Keep the different materials separate to create different 'rooms' for different types of bugs. Make sure

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the twigs, grass etc are lying down to create warm, dry spaces for the creatures to crawl in to. Bees, woodlice and spiders will enjoy this environment

6. Bundle the pine cones closely together so that the open scales interlock and stuff some dry leaves in between. This will create a space which ladybirds and lacewings will enjoy
7. If there is space underneath the pallet, add extra dry leaves so that frogs or hedgehogs can enjoy the hotel too.

Extension ideas

- Create a record of the development of the bug hotel by taking photographs of the children at each stage. Make this into a book and laminate. Hang it on the bug hotel so that children can re-call, re-tell and sequence how they made the bug hotel
- In the spring, take out some of the materials and search for bugs. How many visitors have they had to their hotel? What are the names of the bugs? How can you tell which bug is which? Are there any nests or eggs? Make sure to replace any materials which have got old or damaged over the winter.

Extending the activity

- Publication - [Nature play: Inspiring outdoor approaches](#)
- Training - [Developing quality outdoor provision](#)