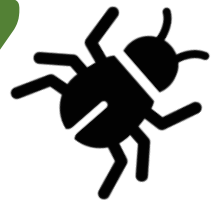




Let's make a 'BUG HOTEL'



Every Thursday in afterschool Club 3.15 –
4.15/5.15

BOOK A
PLACE!



Where to site your mansion

Some invertebrates like cool damp conditions while others prefer the sun. To cater for as many of them as possible, site the mansion where some of it will catch the sun but with the rest of it in shade - say partially under a tree or near a hedge. Choose a level, even surface: the mansion may end up fairly heavy, so will need a firm base.

The basic structure

The basic framework is made of wooden pallets. The more you can use recycled or reclaimed materials the better. The mansion does not need to be more than five pallets high. If you place the bottom pallet upside down, this should create larger openings at the ends, which can be used for a hedgehog house. Although the structure should be stable, you might want to secure each pallet to the one below.

Filling the gaps

There are many different ways to fill the gaps in the structure - here are some suggestions.

Dead wood

Dead wood is essential for the larvae of wood-boring beetles, such as the stag beetle. It also supports many fungi, which help break down the woody material. Crevices under the bark hold centipedes and woodlice.

Holes for solitary bees

Hollow stems, such as old bamboo canes, or holes drilled into blocks of wood, make good nest sites for solitary bees. Holes of different diameters cater for different species. You place canes or hollow plant stems in a length of plastic drainpipe or a section from a plastic drinks bottle.

Straw and hay

This provides many opportunities for invertebrates to burrow in and find safe hibernation sites.

Dry leaves

More homes for a variety of invertebrates; this mimics the litter on the forest floor.

Loose bark

Beetles, centipedes, spiders and woodlice all lurk beneath the decaying wood and bark.

Hedgehog house

Hedgehogs need a secure place to build their nests in; a wooden box under a pile of sticks and debris in a sheltered corner is ideal. Add dry leaves inside as bedding.

Toad hole

Although frogs and toads need a pond to breed in, they can spend most of the year out of water. Stone and tiles provide the cool damp conditions they need. The centre of the mansion will provide a frost-free place during the winter.

Crevices

Many garden invertebrates need a safe place to hibernate in through the winter, and cracks and crevices in the mansion are ideal.

Lacewing homes

Lacewings and their larvae consume large numbers of aphids, as well as other garden pests. You can make a home for lacewings by rolling up a piece of corrugated cardboard and putting it in a waterproof cylinder, such as an old lemonade bottle.

Ladybirds

Ladybirds and their larvae are champion aphid munchers. The adults hibernate over winter; they need dry sticks or leaves to hide in.

Bumblebees

Every spring, queen bumblebees search for a site to build a nest and found a new colony. An upturned flowerpot in a warm sheltered place might be used.

Nectar-producing plants

Why not plant some nectar-rich flowers around your habitat. These provide essential food for butterflies, bees and many other flying insects.

