

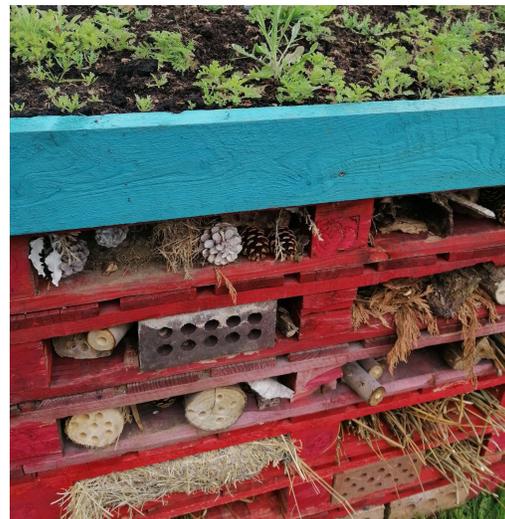


One Planet Matters

Building a Bug Hotel

Bug hotels, or wildlife hotels, provide a safe spot for many different species. It is important to support wildlife in our environments, as their habitats, breeding and feeding grounds are very often in decline. By creating a bug hotel, you could not only be providing a safe place for insects such as bees, ladybirds, and beetles, but also for other wildlife such as hedgehogs and toads!

You can buy ready-made bug hotels, but it's much more fun to build your own. Here are some ideas which you can adapt. Get creative and support biodiversity!



1. CHOOSE YOUR SPOT

- Choose somewhere that has level and firm ground - you don't want your bug hotel toppling over!
- The placement of your bug hotel will influence the kind of wildlife you will attract. Some species like cool, damp conditions, while others prefer sunny spots. If you can, choose a spot which gets partial sun to attract an array of wildlife species - so perhaps place it partially under a tree, for example.
- Keep your bug hotel a little way away from any veg beds.

2. BUILD THE BASIC FRAMEWORK

You will need:

- **Wooden pallets** - The basic framework is generally made with wooden pallets - these are sturdy and give the bug hotel structure. Choose reclaimed pallets if possible. Ideally make your bug hotel 4 or 5 pallets high, with the bottom pallet upside down, as this will create openings at either end which can be used as a hedgehog house! You can use more pallets to make it bigger, but if you do, make sure you secure each pallet to the one below it and build it somewhere where it won't be knocked over - it will be heavy!
- **Bricks** (preferably those with holes through them) - these can be placed at the bottom of the structure if you would like to give it a bit more height. This space could end up being used by hedgehogs as a safe refuge!



3. FILL THE GAPS

You can use any of the following:

- **Dead wood and bark** - this is an increasingly rare habitat which supports beetles, centipedes, spiders, woodlice, fungi, and the larvae of wood-boring beetles.
- **Hollow stems** (such as from shrubs, herbaceous plants, or bamboo canes) - these are used by solitary bees as nesting sites. You can also drill holes into planks of wood to create this. If you are using bamboo sticks, one way to create a nice waterproof habitat for bees is to take an old plastic bottle and cut off the base, filling it with bamboo sticks.
- **Dried sticks and straw or hay** - this acts as a safe nesting site which many invertebrates can use to burrow into. For example, ladybirds love to hibernate in dry sticks.



- **Stones, tiles (e.g. old roofing tiles), and old terracotta pots**- place these at the centre of your bug hotel, creating a cool and damp covered area for frogs and toads to shelter in the winter.
- **Dry leaves** - dry leaves mimic the forest floor and provide a home for a variety of invertebrates, such as beetles, ladybirds.
- **Corrugated cardboard** - if you roll up a piece of corrugated cardboard and put it in a waterproof cylinder, it will create a home for lacewings. You can do this by cutting the base off of a plastic bottle and filling it with the rolled up cardboard.
- **Pine cones** - these have lots of little nooks and crannies for insects to live, breed, and feed.
- **Planks of wood** - these add stability wherever you need it, as well as creating more gaps.
- **Whatever else you can find** - preferably natural materials such as sand, moss, woodchips, or other wooden materials, and particularly those which are being reused!



4. MAKE A ROOF

You can use either:

- Old roof tiles
- Planks of wood with waterproof roofing felt attached



Tips & ideas:

- **Plant wildflowers around your bug hotel** - these will not only make the area look beautiful, it will also make sure your new garden inhabitants have food to eat! You could even add some soil to the roof of your bug hotel and plant some wildflower seeds into it - just make sure you choose flowers that like dry conditions best.
- **Keep an eye on who's moved in!** Use our [BioBlitz sheets](#) to track the wildlife found in your bug hotel and in the area surrounding it. This way you can see how you are supporting biodiversity in your area while using the opportunity to learn a bit more about them.