



Nature Play: Bug Houses

Everybody needs a home!

While people often love neatness and order; bugs and other animals appreciate a mess! Dead plants, piles of leaves and sticks, and underneath rocks can be both a home and a grocery store for a variety of insects, worms, and other animals. A bug hotel can provide a winter shelter, nesting habitat, and source of food for beneficial insects and other animals that help keep pests under control. By providing a lot of different natural materials you can attract a variety of creatures to your hotel. You can't control who takes up residence in your hotel, but if you provide lots of different options, then you should get lots of different animals, and the good will outnumber the unpleasant!

Motivating Question: What makes a nice home for people? Do you think insects like the same kinds of things? What about other animals? What kind of home do insects need?

NOTE for Grownups: it is fun to do these activities with your children, but remember they (not you), should be the ones leading the activity. Letting them lead helps them to learn confidence and problem solving skills.

Directions for a Bug Hotel:

- Framing materials such as a wooden box, plastic bottle (water bottles, soda bottles, milk jugs, etc.) cut into segments, broken pots, or any other materials you have at home. Note: cardboard works but may fall apart after a few rainy days.
- String or glue to hold nesting materials in place.
- Natural material insects can use for nesting: sticks, pebbles, rock, leaves, bark, pinecones, bamboo, dried flowers, straw, burlap, or anything else you can find. You can also make nesting materials out of rolled up newspaper.
- Break materials into smaller pieces and pack the them tightly into your frame. Natural materials can be glued in place using white glue or a glue gun.
- Hang up your bug hotel on a quiet area of your porch, on a tree in your yard, or other safe spot and check to see who moves in! Don't be disappointed if it takes the bugs a little while to find it.

Explore more bug hotels:

- <https://babbedabledo.com/science-for-kids-insect-hotel/>
- <https://gardentherapy.ca/build-a-bug-hotel/>
- <https://www.redtedart.com/simple-bug-hotel-for-kids/>
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel/>
- <https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/>

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Examples and Ideas from the web

