

# Making a home for minibeasts!

There are lots of different ways you can make a home for lots of different types of minibeasts!

**Please only do this activity on your own private land, or where you have permission from the landowner. When collecting materials and resources, please do this responsibly and sensibly. Please don't damage living things. Only collect materials that are already on the ground.**

This activity can be changed to suit the space that you have, and we are only going to offer a few examples (please feel free to research more).



## JOHN MUIR DISCOVER AWARD Summer Holiday Family Challenge



# A Minibeast Hotel fit for Royalty!

*This activity is suitable if you have quite a large private garden or yard, have access to lots of materials and have the time to build.*

**Resources and materials** that could be used (but you may be more creative and think of other things):

- Old wooden pallets
- Bricks
- Wooden logs and sticks
- Moss
- Dry leaves
- Old roofing tiles
- Pine cones
- Bark
- Woodchips
- Roofing felt



## How to:

- Choose a suitable place for your hotel. This should be on relatively level, flat and solid ground. Dependent on where you can put your hotel, may lead to different types of guests. For example some minibeasts will prefer shady, damp conditions whereas others will like the sun.
- The important thing to note is that the hotel needs a really solid base and structure! It can be as big or as small as you want, but it needs to stay in one piece. We would recommend not building your hotel more than a meter high, and to use old wooden pallets for the main frame. You can either use a pallet as your base, or you can use old bricks and then put your first pallet on top.
- You can then use more bricks and continue adding pallets, until you have a few 'storeys'
- It is then time to fill the gaps! Using your other materials fill in your framework to provide lots of different types of 'rooms'. So make sure you leave gaps, and have different sized holes throughout the hotel. Using different sorts of natural materials (dry leaves, sticks, moss etc.) will provide lots of different minibeasts the opportunity to find a home.
- If you have roofing felt, don't forget to add a roof to your hotel after it has been built! Put a large sheet of felt on across the top, and use more bricks to hold it in place, or put some tacks/nails through the roof felt into the wood below (mind your fingers). You could use bricks, thick logs, soil or rubble, if you don't have any felt.



## A Minibeast home au natural!

*If you are lucky enough to have a garden or yard, no matter how big or small, there may be an opportunity to develop a natural minibeast home.*

**Resources and materials** that could be used (but you may be more creative and think of other things):

- Wooden logs and sticks
- Moss , Dry leaves
- Pine cones,
- Woodchips



**How to:**

- You can use lots of natural materials such as sticks, leaves, moss and make a them into a pile, with lots of gaps and holes for these to crawl inside.
- Or if you have an empty plant pot or outdoor container, you could put all these natural things inside, arranged messy or neat. It helps if there are holes at the bottom to allow the minibeasts to move in and out. Feel free to add a welcome sign.

## Hanging mini-hotel!

*A great way to make a home for minibeasts if you don't have a lot of private outdoor space.*

**Resources and materials** that could be used (but you may be more creative and think of other things):

- Empty toilet roll tubes
- Bamboo canes
- Sticks
- Dead leaves
- Twine or string



**How to:**

- Pierce 2 small holes at either side of a toilet tube. Thread a piece of twine through and tie holes at each end so that the string stays in place. Only do this if you want to hand your minibeast hotel.
- Now fill the toilet roll tubes with bamboo canes, small stick and dead leaves. Make sure where possible there are small holes at either end of the toilet roll tube.
- Hang the tube from different locations in your garden. Take a peek look after a week to see what minibeasts have moved in, but try not to wake them up!

## How to make other mini insect hotels :

- You might want to use multiple toilet roll tubes to make a larger structure, fill in multiple toilet roll tubes and then bundle them together with twine or string. Then place on the edge of a yard or garden.
- You can do the same with larger wooden boxes or other containers. Fill with lots of bamboo and natural materials that leave gaps and holes for minibeasts and solitary bees.
- Whatever structure you make your mini inset hotel, make sure there are holes at the bottom to allow the minibeasts to move in and out. Feel free to create a welcome sign.
- Take photos or record what pollinators move in. Download the iRecord app to tell the world how important that flower is for insects.
- <https://irecord.org.uk/app/> - link here for the iRecord free app and information for recording. Contribute your species sightings with GPS acquired coordinates through your phone, provide a description and photograph, thus providing scientists with important new biodiversity information that contributes to nature conservation, planning, research and education.

