

Make a bug hotel

Scouts make a small habitat which will provide shelter for insects, especially for surviving the winter.

Section: All
Time: 1 hour
Where: Home, Den



PLAN

Before making the bug hotels, have the scouts learn about the types of insects which might like to take up residence in their new creation. More inquisitive scouts might like to choose particular insect species to help out, such as solitary bees, and adapt their design for these creatures.

Materials

A wooden outer structure will help to make the bug hotel solid enough to last outdoors, so some scrap wood, a saw, hammer and nails, or screws and screwdriver will be needed. After that, lots of dried hollow plant stems can be gathered. Finally, you might also want a wood drill with different sized drill-bits for certain designs.

DO

Making the bug hotels can be as simple or elaborate as the scouts want. The more sturdy they make them, the longer they will last, giving shelter to insects.

One approach is to make a wooden frame and pack this with suitable materials such as dried hollow plant stems. Making a frame with a number of compartments will allow for a few different types of filling. This caters for different insects but also looks very cool! Another option is to use a solid piece of wood and drill different sized holes in it. Don't drill the whole way through as this will then create tunnels in the wood for insects to use, much like rabbits might use a burrow.

For a spectacular bug hotel, why not combine all of these ideas together? Once the bug hotels have been made, give them a final check before they are put into position. A few extra nails and screws might make them more sturdy at this point!

The hotels can be placed anywhere at all, but above ground level is probably better. Secure them in place to avoid wind damage, then move off and let nature do its thing.

REVIEW

While planning and doing the activity, discuss with the scouts why insects are an important part of our ecosystem. Remind them of insects' roles in breaking down all kinds of waste, as pollinators, and as food for other species. Can the scouts imagine what the world would be like if there were less insects, or if some disappeared altogether? Remember to return to the bug hotels at different times of the year to see how they are being used. Watch for holes covered up by insects who are hibernating during winter.



In a nutshell...

- Scouts learn about insects in their area
- They design and build a bug hotel
- After placing the bug hotels in place, they monitor over the course of the year to see what takes up residence



Follow-on

There are lots of other things that scouts can make to help wildlife in their community. These include building bird feeders, bird boxes and net roost boxes. Check out the other Life on Land resources for other ideas.



SDG 15 Life on Land

SDG 15 calls for urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and prevent the extinction of threatened species. When scouts engage directly with nature like this, and seek to understand the needs of individual species within an ecosystem, they have taken another step in understanding and appreciating our natural habitats.



Find out more!

Visit - www.betterworld.ie

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Produced by the Scouting Ireland Sustainable Scouting Team