



BUILD YOUR OWN LUXURY BUG HOTEL

In the wild, fallen trees and decaying wood provide fantastic natural homes for all sorts of bugs and wildlife. In our gardens and parks though, we just don't provide enough venues for creatures to stay – and many of them are natural little helpers in the garden by eating plant predators.

That's where the bug hotel comes in. With the right accommodation, an average garden could hold over 2,000 different species of insect!

WHO STAYS IN THE BUG HOTEL?

Lots of invertebrates such as ladybirds and insects. Bumblebees and solitary bees. Frogs, toads and even hedgehogs like to check in sometimes too.

There are many models of hotel and different approaches to building them but they're very easy to make. You will find that you already have many of the materials lying around.

GET READY

Collect materials, such as:

- Bricks and concrete blocks
- Wooden pallets, or strips of wood
- Pen casings and drinking straws
- Cardboard tubes and corrugated card
- Straw, hay, dry leaf litter, moss and pinecones
- Plant pots
- Plastic and ceramic pipes
- Roof tiles
- Hollow bamboo canes
- Dead hollow stems cut from shrubs
- Logs drilled with various sized holes
- Crushed brick and concrete rubble
- Stones and tiles

These aren't all essential – use your imagination!

WHICH ROOMS FOR WHICH BUGS?

You'll need to create lots of different types of rooms within your hotel to attract a range of guests. Some ideas include:

Dead wood

Pieces of dead wood is used by the larvae of wood-boring beetles, such as the stag beetle. Centipedes and woodlice live under bark. Fungi also loves dead wood.

Hollow canes and plant stems

Pack hollow bamboo canes and plant stems of different sizes onto a length of plastic piping or drinks bottle. These are great places for nest sites for solitary bees. The female bee lays an egg on top of a mass of pollen at the end of a hollow tube, she then seals the entrance with a plug of mud. Make sure your bee rooms are on the sunny side!

Stone and tile

You might think that frogs and toads live in ponds, but actually they spend most of their time out of water and they need cool damp places to stay. Crevices between stones are ideal.

Straw, hay and dried leaves

Fill pieces of old pipe or gaps within the hotel with straw and hay. Lots of insects love to stay here.

Corrugated cardboard

Don't send it to the dump! Collect your old corrugated cardboard and make it into a home for lacewings by rolling it up and putting it in a waterproof tube such as a drinks bottle.

Upturned flowerpots

These may attract queen bumblebees as a place to start a new colony.



HOW TO MAKE

You can make a bijou, boutique bug hotel or a huge complex. The main thing is to provide lots of nooks and crannies.

You'll need to start on a firm, level site in light shade. Most of your future residents prefer moist places, although bees like to be in sunlight. Try putting your hotel next to a hedge or shrubs to help attract your first guests.

You create a bug hotel layer by layer. Put two parallel lines of bricks, pack in places for bugs to stay inbetween, then cover with pieces of flat wood. Then repeat. For a larger, more ambitious hotel you can use old wooden pallets, or even unwanted shelves. (see pictures)