



Lesson 3: Making Bee & Bug Hotels

Teaching Instructions

Learning Outcomes

- Communicate; take part in conversation, share experiences, ideas and information.
- Explore and discover interesting features of habitats, nature and the impact of human activity.
- Improve understanding of conservation and biodiversity.
- To be able to construct a bee or bug hotel and use tools appropriately.

Required Resources

For the bee hotel: bamboo canes, garden twine or string, saws, logs, drills, copies of the bee hotel worksheet.

For the bug hotel: plastic mesh or chicken wire, garden string or plastic covered wire ties, a piece of flat wood, dead leaves, twigs. Copies of the bug hotel worksheet.

Notes

Lesson duration: We would recommend spending one lesson on these activities; you may want to have one group of children making the bee hotel and another group making the bug hotel.

This is an activity that is best carried out outside, but the construction of the hotels could be done inside if the weather is unsuitable.

Instruct the children on the safe use of tools.



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Teaching Plan

Activity 1 - Discussion

Start the lesson with a discussion about what the children understand by the term 'minibeasts' and why we should help them. Why would we need to make homes for them?

Activity 2 - Create a Bee Hotel

1. Prepare the tubes: Bamboo canes have sealed nodes, cut them so that long hollow sections are exposed. Cut them into 10-20cm sections.
2. Tie a bundle of canes together with garden twine or string.
3. Place and anchor your bee hotel on a sunny or partly sunny shelf in a shed or somewhere outside where it is protected from rain.
4. Observe and enjoy the different types of solitary bee using their new homes. You may also see species of wasps using the tubes whose larvae feed on the bee grubs.



Note: these nests will attract solitary bees, not those that live in hives or groups. Some of these bees are very small and black in colour so they may not even look like what many of us think of as bees! The majority of the bees that use the hotel cannot sting you.

You will know if your nest is being used as the ends of the tubes will be sealed with leaves or mud. Your hotel may also be used by other bugs such as ladybirds and lacewings, looking for a safe place to shelter in!



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Activity 3 – Create a Bug Hotel

- For your bug hotel you will need a one metre length of green plastic mesh or chicken wire. Curl it into a tube and tie the long edges together using four twists of plastic coated wire or string.
- Take some dead plant stems or twigs and poke them through the sides of the cylinder at the bottom. The twigs overlap to form a mesh which stops the leaves falling out the bottom if you pick it up. It also stops the leaves touching the ground and getting damp.
- Fill the cylinder with dry dead leaves.
- Put a piece of wood on top to stop the rain getting in (the wood needs to be heavy so it won't blow away).
- As the leaves in the hotel dry out they will shrink, so try to keep some extra ones to top – up the tube.
- Once you have made your hotel put it in a quiet corner of the garden – preferably somewhere in the shade. As the nights start getting colder, bugs will find your hotel and use it as a safe dry place to hibernate.



Bug hotel © Zoe Bunter

Lesson extension

Revisit the hotels at various times throughout the year to see if there is any evidence of bugs and bees using them. The children may like to make a booklet about the solitary bees that may use the bee hotel.