



STB Newsletter

November 2021

If you go down to the woods boardwalk today ...

... You might notice that our volunteers have been refurbishing the Bug Hotels to accommodate our visiting mini beasts.

Rising case numbers of Covid of late meant that we didn't consider it sensible to put out a shout for all hands on deck, better to keep numbers to a minimum. However, it did occur to us that you may want to consider replicating our activity in your own gardens, perhaps involving children/grandchildren. There can never be enough accommodation for the mini creatures that play an important role in our environment. So here is a suggested step by step account as promoted by the RSPB - have fun!



Build a Bug Hotel



Create a multi-storey hotel that's full of all sorts of natural materials, providing hidey-holes for creatures galore. What better use for all your garden waste & odds & ends? Build your bug hotel well & it could shelter anything from hedgehogs to toads, solitary bees to bumblebees, ladybirds to woodlice.



🕒 Less than 2 hours 🧐 Difficulty level: Medium

♥ To help: Hedgehogs, frogs, toads & newts, bees, creepy crawlies, dragonflies & damselflies

When can you get started?

You can build your bug hotel at any time of year, but you may find you have most natural materials such as straw, dry grass and hollow plant stems in autumn.

Gather together any of the following:

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Old wooden pallets | Strips of wood | Straw |
| Moss | Dry leaves | Woodchips |
| Old terracotta pots | Old roofing tiles | Bricks, preferably those with holes through them |
| Old logs | Bark | Pine cones |
| Sand | Soil | Hollow bamboo canes |
| Planks of wood | Sheet of roofing felt | Dead hollow stems from shrubs/herbaceous plants |
| Whatever else you can find - preferably natural materials | | |

Step-by-step guide:

Choose a good site. It needs to be level and the ground firm. You'll get different residents depending on where you place your hotel, as some like cool, damp conditions and others (such as solitary bees) prefer the sun. If you have vegetable beds, keep it a good distance away from them.

The Slash Pond Boardwalk is an alternative attraction to our wonderful Seaside Award beach (the national standard for the best beaches across the UK). At more than 350 metres,



the boardwalk is a sheltered, non-slip, paw friendly decked walkway surrounding a serene pond in a habitat that supports a picnic area, willow dens, bug houses and bat & bird nesting boxes.

Parking at Trafalgar Terrace car park (along the seafront, turn left at the Galleon Inn, ¼ mile on the left. Parking is free with a donation box at the entrance to help local community groups). Walk out of the car park, turn left, the walk entrance is 30 metres on the left. Sat Nav directions use SA62 3JU. Bring along a small net and enjoy the 'Dipping Deck' or test yourself with our Nature Trail Quiz. The area offers a circular route of approximately ½ mile which is accessible to motobility scooters, wheelchairs and pushchairs.

The basic structure. You will need a strong, stable framework that's no more than a metre high! Old wooden pallets are perfect for a large hotel as they're sturdy and come with ready-made gaps. Start by laying some bricks on the ground as sturdy corners. Leave some spaces in between the bricks – try creating an H-shape. Add three or four layers of wooden pallets on top of your bricks. If you leave larger ends, you're more likely to attract hedgehogs. You can also make a smaller structure, depending on the wood & space you have.



Fill the gaps. The idea is to provide all sorts of nooks and crannies, crevices, tunnels and cosy beds.

Include:

Dead wood & loose bark for creepy crawlies like beetles, centipedes, spiders & woodlice.
Holes & small tubes (not plastic) for solitary bees made out of bamboo, reeds & drilled logs
Larger holes with stones and tiles, which provide the cool, damp conditions frogs and toads like
Dry leaves, sticks or straw for ladybirds (they eat aphids) and other beetles & bugs.
Corrugated cardboard for lacewings (their larvae eat aphids, too).
Dry leaves which mimic a natural forest floor.
You can even put a hedgehog box into the base of the hotel.

Add a 'roof'. When you think you've gone high enough, making sure the stack remains stable, put a roof on to keep it relatively dry. Use old roof tiles or some old planks covered with roofing felt. You could even give it a 'green' or 'brown' roof by putting a bit of rubble or gritty soil on top. Only plants that love dry conditions cope up there, but some wild flower seeds could arrive on the breeze and take root. Surround your hotel with nectar-rich flowers – essential food for butterflies, bees and other pollinating insects.

If you want, choose a name for your hotel and put a sign up outside

 Most activity in your hotel is likely to be after dark. Wrap up & go out with a torch to see who is popping in and out.

If the above is slightly too ambitious or time consuming at the moment for you ... simple steps you can take to provide appealing habitats include:

- Drilled holes in logs provide a home for solitary bees. Bury a log half underground, or stack a few in a damp, shady corner, or even a sunny spot.
- Rake fallen leaves into corners or under the base of shrubs - they provide a nutritious, insulating, layer for insects and a ready made larder for birds, foraging hedgehogs, frogs and toads.
- Piling leaves under a 'cage' of chicken wire means a healthy, peat-free hit of leaf mould for the garden come spring, as does a compost heap that includes a mix of green (fresh cuttings) and brown (sticks, twigs, roots). Let the insects, bacteria and fungi work to turn it all back into life-giving, sweet smelling soil, from which life, the food-chain and bird song can spring.

For more information on these and other outdoor activities ...

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/>

Join Us:

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for news of meetings, TLC days and updates to any of the dates/times listed in this newsletter.

Facebook - [facebook.com/supporttheboardwalk](https://www.facebook.com/supporttheboardwalk) or email us boardwalkgang@gmail.com

'Support the Boardwalk' – Fundraising to Preserve and to Enhance

Website - <http://www.supporttheboardwalk.co.uk>