

# Outdoor & Nature



## MINI BEAST HOTELS



# Did you know?

The word bug is often used when talking about minibeasts, but there is a group of creepy crawlies that scientists call 'true bugs'. They are different to other minibeasts because they use special sucking mouth-parts to eat and suck up fluid such as plant sap. True bugs include shield bugs, aphids and bed bugs.

The best bug hotels have lots of small spaces in different shapes and sizes and made from different materials. Ideally some should be nice and dry inside, and others a bit damp. Bug hotels are generally made from recycled materials, or natural objects. This helps them blend in with their surroundings and is probably more attractive to the mini-beast guests.

You can choose any of the following materials to create your hotel: Old wooden pallets, 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 or whatever else you can find - preferably natural materials!

### Top tips:

- \* Before you get started building, gather your materials together and sketch out a basic plan.
  - \* Choose a suitable site. It needs to be level and the ground firm.
  - \* Think about the basic structure - you will need a strong, stable framework that's no more than a metre high!
- 1) Pallets, planks of wood or bricks make the best starting point as these are sturdy and will help with structure. Start with a H shape and build upwards leaving gaps between the wood or brick. No more than 3 or 4 layers.
  - 2) If you don't have these materials to hand, don't worry you can create a more simple design using pots or rope such as the ones in the images at the bottom.
  - 3) Fill the gaps with a combination of the other smaller materials you have—the idea is to create all sorts of nooks and crannies for your creepy crawlies to inhabit. Insects like beetles, spider, woodlice and centipedes love dead wood and loose bark. Larger holes, stones and tiles provide dark damp conditions that frogs and toads might like.
  - 4) The Roof—you want a to add a roof to keep things relatively dry. Here you can use things like old tiles, planks of wood, anything that will stop all the rain from getting in.
  - 5) Finally give your wonderful hotel a name and let the guests arrive!



# ULTIMATE ACTIVITY CAMPS

