

Age range:



Time needed:



Resources:



**Lots of minibeasts need somewhere to shelter over winter - 'bug hotels' of different sizes can provide an artificial hibernaculum in parks and gardens - a winter home for spiders, woodlice, beetles, bees and more.**

### You will need:

For large hotels:

- wooden pallets, bricks (with holes through them)
- stones/rocks
- sticks, bamboo canes
- terracotta pots
- pine cones, hay/straw, dry leaves

For small hotels:

- scissors/utility knife, secateurs or small saw
- plastic bottles
- corrugated cardboard (cut into strips)
- bamboo canes
- hay/straw
- masking tape
- String, tape or wire to secure

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1.** Before you start the activity, prepare plastic bottles for small hotels by cutting off the tops, and covering the sharp cut edge with masking tape.

Cut bamboo canes into short lengths that will fit neatly in the cut bottles.

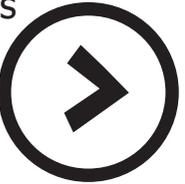
**2.** Explain to the group that insects (and other minibeasts) are an important part of the ecosystem, and the more diversity there is in that ecosystem the better.

Species like woodlice, solitary bees/wasps and ladybirds seek out sheltered places to spend the cold winter months, and a bug hotel can provide that shelter in a garden.

**3.** Find suitable places for your bug hotels - minibeasts need somewhere dry, sheltered, and insulated from the cold to overwinter.

The hotels themselves will provide some insulation, but a sheltered location such as an outside windowsill is good for small hotels, and an area sheltered by trees or near to buildings/walls is good for a large hotel.

**4.** For a large hotel, build a tower with wooden pallets. Use hard, heavy materials such as stones and bricks to fill in the levels, then add lighter materials like sticks, leaves and straw to fill up gaps.



**5.** For small hotels, take a bottle and pack it tightly with folded or rolled strips of cardboard and lengths of bamboo. Then fill up any large gaps with hay or straw (insects need small gaps to make their homes, but it should be packed tightly enough that the material doesn't rattle or fall out).

**6.** Put small hotels on their side in your chosen location - you can use string, tape or wire to secure it in place if necessary.

This activity is adapted from the Woodland Trust's "Nature Detectives" programme - find more resources and activities at [naturedetectives.woodlandtrust.org.uk/](http://naturedetectives.woodlandtrust.org.uk/)

#### TAKE IT FURTHER...

You can check back to see if any insects have moved in, but be careful not to disturb overwintering insects!

Ask the group why it's important to protect insect life (thinking about their role as both pollinators, and as prey for other animals/birds).