

Minibeasts

Spring is well and truly here now, and as the weather warms up lots of creepy crawlies are out and about. Time to take a close look around your garden, or when you are out for your walk and see what you can find. You'll soon notice it's teeming with wildlife!



Hurt Nø Living Thing

Christina Rossetti



Hurt nø living thing;
Ladybird, nør butterfly,



Nør moth with dusty wing,
Nør cricket chirping cheerily,
Nør grasshøpper so light of leap,
Nør dancing gnat, nør beetle fat,
Nør harmless worms that creep.



As you do these activities remember to take great care of these tiny living creatures

1. **Go on a Bug Safari** – what tiny creatures can you find and where do they like to live?

For simple identification:

http://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activities/pdfs/pdf_creepy_crawly_spotter_sheet.pdf

More detailed:

<https://www.opalexplorenature.org/sites/default/files/7/image/Invertebrates%2520guide-%2520UPDATED%2520FINAL.pdf>

2. **Build a Pitfall Trap** – set a trap and see what you catch
3. **Build a Minibeast home** – use what you can find to build a home to encourage bugs to live with you!
4. **Rock Bugs or Dough Bugs** – 2 ideas of ways to create bugs of your own
5. **Create and Eat Fruity Bugs** – yum and healthy too!

Bug Safari

Remember not to harm any creature and carefully replace anything you move – it is their home.



You will need:

- plastic tub – to collect your creature in momentarily
- paint brush for gently picking creatures up
- white sheet
- magnifier, if you have one, will help you get a closer look

What to do:

Check out all these places creepy crawlies might live. Different creatures like different conditions:

- **Under loose stones, paving slabs or plant pots** where it is cool, damp and dark you might find woodlouse, beetles, slugs, millipedes, worms, centipedes, earwigs
- **Among the branches of a bush or tree** – lay a white sheet underneath then gently shake the branches. Be quick to spot what falls as chances are they will fly off straight away!
- **In the soil or leaf litter** – dig up some soil and gently hunt through it for worms and beetles
- **Among long grass** – get down and gets a bug's eye view to spot a ladybird,
- **On flowers and blossom** – spot pollinators such as bees, hoverflies, wasps, pollen beetles and butterflies. Which flowers are attracting the most?
- **Among paving slabs and dry walls** – find teams of scurrying ants and tell-tale slug trails and spiders webs – is the spider still there?
- **In or under fallen rotting logs** – many of the creatures here, feasting on the wood and helping it to decay, will be too tiny to see.

Build a Pitfall Trap

This is a great way to safely capture small creatures (and this is not meaning your younger brother or sister!!).

You will need:

- A smooth steep sided container such as a yogurt pot
- 4 stones
- A piece of wood or tile
- Trowel
- Food scraps (optional)

What to do:

1. Choose a quiet spot in your garden where people and dogs tend not to walk.
2. Dig a hole big enough to fit your container making sure the top is level with the soil around it.
3. Add a little extra soil in its base (and food scraps).
4. Space the 4 stones around the top and place the piece of wood or tile on top. This will stop the rain getting in and shade it from the sun.
5. Leave the trap overnight and check it in the morning.
6. Look carefully some creatures may be hiding in the soil.
7. Make sure you release any creatures in the trap carefully and if you leave it in place check and release any others every morning



Build a Minibeast home

Encourage bugs to live in your garden by creating a safe place for them to live, hibernate and lay their eggs. There are all sorts of designs. It can be as simple or fancy as you like. Make sure you put it in a sheltered area that won't get disturbed.

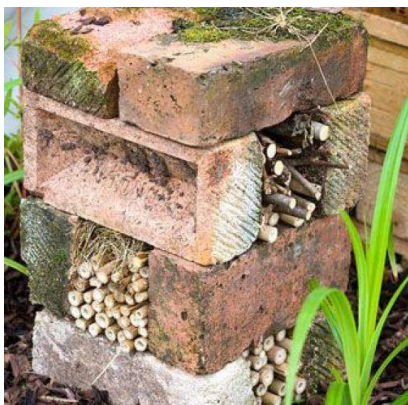


You will need:

- Something to give structure eg a large plastic drinks bottle, an old mug, a clean food can, old bricks, roof tiles
- Twigs, hollow dead stems/canes, pine cones, old plant pots, dried plant stems, dried seed heads

What to do:

1. Build your structure or secure a way of hanging it. Make sure the rain is not able to get in.
2. Stuff it with materials which will allow the bugs to crawl in.
3. Come back soon and see if any beasties have moved in.
4. As the material rots down, add more to keep it packed.



Rock Bugs or Dough Bugs!!

For Rock Bugs you will need:

- Choose some flat or bug shaped pebbles (you might struggle to find a worm shaped pebble!)
- Sharpie or other permanent pens, acrylic paints or nail varnish!



What to do:

1. Make sure your pebbles are clean and dry
2. With a pencil draw on the design of your bug – this could be as a real bug (see the identification sheets) or your own invention. You can either make the whole pebble into a bug or have the picture of the bug on the pebble.



3. Carefully colour or paint on the colours

4. Make a few, hide them around your garden in the places they might live and challenge others to find them.

For Dough Bugs you will need:

- a lump of playdough, salt dough, plasticine or damp mud
- natural materials that you find on the ground

What to do:

1. Make the dough into a body shape for your beastie
2. Use tiny twigs, seeds, tiny stones, petals, leaves to add wings, legs, eyes, antennae, tongue and whatever else you think your minibeast needs to help it get around, feed and protect itself!
3. Find a place for your bug to live that is safe from predators!



Fruity Bugs

You will need:

A selection of pieces of fruit such as:

- Apple or pear quarter/slices
- A few blueberries, strawberries or raspberries
- Slices of cucumber or kiwi, some halved
- Cherry tomatoes whole or halved
- Pepper slices
- Mangetout/pea pods
- Peashoots

What to do:

1. Wash your hands and gather a selection of fruits
2. Wow look at the lovely variety and colours!
They have all grown on plants which need insects to pollinate their flowers so their fruit will form.
Pollinating insects such as bees and wasps are really important!
3. On a plate, lay out a design for your own bug using the pieces of fruit to make the body, eyes, wings, antennae or whatever you would like it to have. You can let your imagination go!
4. Admire it, take a photo of it!
5. EAT IT – yum!

