

Garden Education from the Salmon Center

How to: Make a Bug House



Image: permies.com



Image: littlesilverhedgehog.files.wordpress.com



Image: the-gingerbread-house.co.uk

Insects pollinate, eat pests, and support diversity in the environment. By building a bug house in your yard or garden, you can provide space for a variety of insects including ladybugs, beetles, bumble bees, and mason bees. A bug house can be as simple or complex, large or small, as you'd like. No matter what, it'll be a great spot for some winged or crawling friends! Once it's built, watch who goes in and out to learn about the insects living all around us. The instructions below will show you how to make a bug house with a variety of basic materials. Feel free to use any similar materials you have on hand in your yard, recycling bin, or collected on walks.

Suggested Materials:

- Scrap wood (untreated)
- Bricks and/or cinder blocks
- Old wooden pallets
- Small logs
- Glass jars (make sure glass is in the shade as it will heat up and harm inhabitants)
- Clay garden pots (broken or intact)
- Cut bamboo or reeds
- Pine cones
- Branches and twigs
- Moss

*avoid products that will turn into trash, like plastic bottles

Instructions:

1. Pick a location for your bug house. This should be somewhere with shade/out of direct sun and sheltered from heavy winds. If you're trying to attract pollinators to your garden, you can build it right in your garden but some pests like slugs and snails might take up residence too. If that worries you, give it some distance.
2. Set up your base structure by layering wood to make a set of boxes. Make as many compartments as you want. If you have the materials, make a peaked roof to keep out rain. You can also stack pallets, sheets of wood, cinder blocks, or bricks. If you don't have these materials don't worry! Pile your other materials directly on the ground in a mound, placing branches or logs on the bottom. You can also combine all these options!
3. Drill holes in small logs or blocks of wood, if you have them. These holes can be varying widths to accommodate different species, but should be several inches long (5-10"). Set the blocks of wood in the compartments of your house, or pile them on the ground. Make sure a few are stacked so that they'll stay dry off the ground.
4. Place any clay pots or jars on their sides in compartments.
5. Fill compartments and/or clay pots and jars with cut bamboo or reeds, if you have them.
6. Fill remaining compartments with twigs, pine cones, moss, or other materials from your yard.
7. Add any signage or decorations you'd like.
8. Wait for bugs to move in!