

# Ninewells Community Garden

## Building a Bug Hotel

**Insects are an essential part of an ecologically sustainable garden but many of them have trouble overwintering in these spaces due to a lack of suitable habitat.** For example, ladybirds like to hibernate in piles of leaf litter, holes in tree bark or cracks in rocks. These conditions may not be available in a modern garden. But you can create them with a bug hotel.

### Position

A sheltered and shady part of the garden is best for most bugs as they prefer a cooler, moist environment. A bit of morning or evening sun is fine and will help to prevent mould. Although a solitary bee house will need to be somewhere sunny and a bit warmer. Ensure it's placed on stable ground where it can remain undisturbed throughout the winter. Ideally the main nesting part should be at least a metre off the ground to prevent the inhabitants being disturbed by nosy neighbours such as pets.



### MATERIALS

BARK  
PINE CONES  
STRAW OR HAY  
OLD GARDENING POTS  
DRY LEAVES  
WOODEN PALLETS  
BAMBOO CANES  
ROTTING WOOD  
SOLID MATERIAL FOR ROOF  
OLD PIPES OR ROOF TILES  
LOGS & TWIGS

### Layer

If you know a little carpentry, you can cut up a plank of wood and nail the parts together creating a box with compartments in which to stuff various fillings. You can also drill holes of differing sizes into pieces of solid wood. The structure will need to be at least 15 cm deep and have an overhanging roof to keep the hotel rooms dry when it rains. Of course, it's also possible to build one without tools, just by layering up materials such as bricks and wood. And if all else fails, there are now many shapes and sizes available to buy on the market.

### Fill

Stuff the bug hotel with your chosen fillings. Ladybirds may like wood shavings. Other invertebrates will go for acorns. Solitary bees will prefer tubes. Different species of bee prefer tubes of varying sizes. Squeeze everything together so it stays in place. You'll find it's easier to wedge things into a box divided into compartments than if it was one big box. Angle tubes slightly upwards towards the back, again just to make sure rain doesn't get in. Who wants to be rudely awoken by a puddle!?

### Other Resources

The RSPB website has a good guide including a video: (walkthrough (<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel/>))

The Wildlife Trusts website has a helpful infographic: (<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-bug-mansion>)

