

What is a bug hotel?

Bug hotels are constructions that offer shelter for invertebrates, either to overwinter, breed or spend their daily lives. There are no hard and fast rules - they can be made to any size or shape and from a variety of materials to cater for different bugs.

Why build a bug hotel?

Bug hotels can be a focal point for any wildlife garden, even formal gardens where habitat piles might seem a bit messy.

Building a bug hotel can encourage pollinators and insect predators into your garden and they are a great way to repurpose unwanted materials.



© apeyron



© Ruth Quinn

Bug hotel materials

Some suggested filler materials (**natural** and **artificial**):

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| ✓ sticks | ✓ hollow stems | ✓ Corrugated card |
| ✓ bamboo canes | ✓ dry leaves | ✓ Tiles |
| ✓ stones | ✓ bark | ✓ Tubes and pipes |
| ✓ dry seed heads | ✓ straw or hay | ✓ Plant pots |
| ✓ pinecones | ✓ deadwood | ✓ Bricks and rubble |

Bug hotel ideas

Bug boxes



© Zach Stagers

Stack materials in a box e.g. drilled logs, air bricks and bunches or tubes of canes.

Bug pots



© Ludovic Debono

Fill a plant pot with straw and attach it somewhere upside-down in the garden, either on a sturdy cane or hanging from a tree.

Bug tubes



© bazza1960

Make a tube out of mesh with a scaffold of twigs poked through the bottom and fill it with dead leaves. Cover with a waterproof roof.

Building a big bug hotel

There are several ways you can make a big bug hotel. One of the easiest is to use a framework of reclaimed pallets.

- ✓ **Choose a spot** for your bug hotel that combines sun and shade.
(If you want to include a bee hotel, make sure the south-facing side is in full sun).
- ✓ **Lay the foundations** for your bug hotel by preparing the ground so that it is even; lay bricks to support the corners.
- ✓ **Build it up** by stacking the pallets to no more than a meter high (about 5 pallets), preferably facing alternate directions if they are square.
(You might want to peg down the bottom one and secure each pallet to the one below to be on the safe side.)
- ✓ **Fill it in** by adding materials to fill the gaps, the more nooks and crannies the better. Make sure that non-waterproof materials don't stick out too far where they may get rained on.
(If you are including a bee hotel, put the entrance at the south-facing side. It's good to have deadwood nearest the ground where it will stay cool and humid.)
- ✓ **Add a waterproof roof.** You could use roof tiles, roofing felt (either corrugated or laid over planks), a green roof of turf or a 'brown roof' by putting gritty soil or rubble on top and letting plants take root.
- ✓ **Enjoy your bug hotel!** A night safari with a torch may reveal the nocturnal invertebrate residents of your bug hotel. Adding a sign to your bug hotel will let friends and neighbours know that you're doing your bit for bugs - especially if it is in a public place.



What might live in your bug hotel?

- ✓ **Throughout the year:**
 - woodlice
 - centipedes and millipedes
 - earwigs
 - ground beetles
 - spiders



- ✓ **Wintering:**
 - ladybirds
 - lacewings
 - butterflies and moths
 - hoverflies



- ✓ **Breeding:**
 - solitary bees
 - solitary wasps
 - deadwood beetles

