



With thanks to 'Going Wild in Bishop's Castle' project for sharing this leaflet across Shropshire Town and Parish Councils. This is

the second of a series of

leaflets from this Shropshire project: <https://lightfootenterprises.org/going-wild-in-bc>

Please collect them and use them as a resource for your household and Parish.

"We hear a lot about the threats to conspicuous and charismatic animals such as birds and mammals, but far less about the insects that make up over half of all species and play a vital role in the world's ecosystems"

Sir David Attenborough

What are insects?



Insects are one of the most common forms of invertebrate (animals without a backbone or skeleton). Around 75% of animals on Earth are insects and they developed on Earth long before humans. Today there are around 1 million known insect species and these include butterflies, flies, beetles, ants, grasshoppers, silverfish, and bees.

Why do insects need help?

Insects have declined by 75% in the past 50 years.

Few people seem to realise how devastating this is, not only for human wellbeing (we need insects to pollinate our crops, recycle dung, leaves and corpses, keep the soil healthy, control pests, and much more) but for larger animals too, such as birds, fish and frogs, which rely on insects for food.

Invertebrates are critical for our ecosystem. As insects become scarcer, our world will slowly grind to a halt, **for it cannot function without them.**

Pollinators

Many insects are pollinators. We rely on pollinators such as bees to pollinate food that we eat.

Pollinators are declining and need as much help as we can give.

Give insects a home!

Like us, invertebrates need somewhere to live and they need food.

Messy gardens with some piles of wood and leaves, for example, provide shelter and food. However, we are increasingly turning our gardens into tidy outside rooms, leaving little suitable opportunities for our insects.

We can help them in our gardens, by providing suitable insect homes! The advantages are:

- You do not need expensive materials; you can re-use or upcycle materials that you already have
- It can be an attractive and interesting feature in your garden
- If you have children in your family, it is a really fun project to get them involved in
- You are taking a small step to helping our wildlife at a time when it is most critical
- Being outside and making things is good for mental health.



How to make insect homes

1. Choose a site. Different conditions will attract different insects. The site needs to be level and firm. Pallets are ideal for large insect 'hotels' as they have gaps already in them. Create different size nooks and crannies.

2. Use materials such as bark, tubes made of wood or bamboo, larger holes made with tiles or stones, dried leaves and sticks, corrugated cardboard, dried leaves (ie try and mimic a forest floor).

3. Add a roof, use wood, old tiles, old roof felt, anything you can find that will keep it reasonably dry.

4. Solitary bees and other pollinators like sun, so a south facing site is best.

Other invertebrates such as woodlice and earwigs prefer shady spots. Have an insect 'home' in each spot. Check out the websites below for more ideas on building homes for insects in your back garden or yard.

Suggested materials to use:

- Pallets or strips of wood
- Roof tiles
- Plastic and ceramic pipes of various sizes
- Deadwood – sticks and logs of all sizes up to half a metre long
- Logs drilled with various sized holes
- Hollow bamboo canes
- Bricks/concrete blocks (preferably with holes)
- Cardboard tubes and corrugated card (keep them dry!)
- Roofing felt
- Stones, rubble, bricks
- Straw, hay, sand
- Dry leaf litter
- Plastic bottles (old ones - do not buy for this purpose!)
- Pen casings and drinking straws; plant pots; pinecones

Further information

- **Woodland Trust**
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/09/how-to-build-a-bug-hotel
- **You Tube video**
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qpau_m2OCaE
- **RSPB**
www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/nature-on-your-doorstep/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel

- **The Wildlife Trust**
www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-bug-mansion
- **Buglife**
www.buglife.org.uk
- **Insect declines and why they matter**
(Professor Dave Goulson report)
- **Recommended reading**
Silent Earth by Professor Dave Goulson