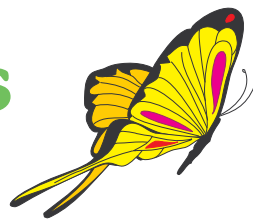


Pests and Predators – Making an Insect Hotel



Time of Year

All year round.

Aim

To increase knowledge of biodiversity in the garden and to acquire practical skills for dealing with pests and predators in the food garden.

Cross Curriculum Relevance

SESE:

Living things, environmental awareness and care, observing, recording, insect identification, food chains.

Languages:

New words, literacy, spelling.

Art:

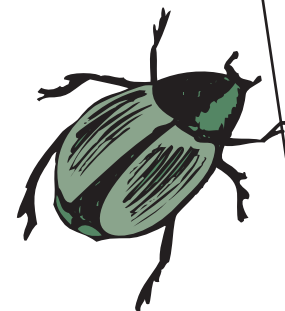
Making insect hotels/drawings/photographs/creativity.

SPHE:

Myself & the wider world, active and responsible citizenship.

Informal Curriculum:

Green Schools, Discover Primary Science.



1

How to make an insect hotel

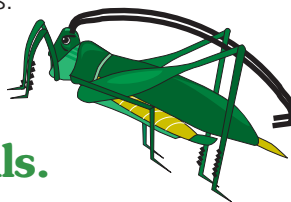
For a larger insect hotel:

- Build a stack of old wooden pallets in a quiet or unused shady corner of the garden, near trees or hedges.
- Fill the holes in between the layers with sticks, leaves and logs. This can be done with a large group.

To make a smaller insect hotel:

- Cut sticks, twigs and bamboos to approximately 250mm.
- Gather leaves and flowers from around the school grounds.
- Tie together sticks, twigs, bamboos and leaves with twine.
- Decorate with flowers and hang in the garden or school grounds.
- This can be done in small groups or pairs.

Observe the insect hotel at regular intervals.



2

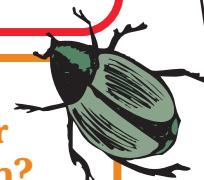
Resources needed

- Sticks
- Leaves
- Logs
- Twigs
- Bamboos
- Flowers
- Twine
- Secateurs
- Scissors
- Pallets (optional)

3

Where to go for more information?

- **ENFO** – www.enfo.ie
- **Discover Primary Science**
www.primaryscience.ie
- **The Year Round Organic School Garden**
(Living Publications)
ISBN 978 0 9561301-0-5
gortbrackorg@gmail.com
- **Green Schools**
www.greenschoolsireland.ie



Pests and Predators

- Making an Insect Hotel contd.

Health & Safety

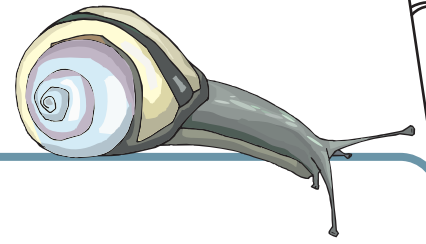
Watch out for sharp sticks or twigs and be careful when using scissors. Stay with your group. Use tools safely. Wash hands after garden session. Please refer to the worksheet on Health & Safety for detailed information.

4

Snails and Slugs in the food garden

There are many ways of dealing with them organically

- Encourage biodiversity in the garden by encouraging wild areas and habitats for birds (thrushes and blackbirds) and amphibians. Frogs and birds will eat slugs and snails. This identifies the importance of the lifecycle.
- Set slug traps – use yogurt pots or small tubs with some old beer.
- You can use one of the following around the base of plants or containers - copper tape, crushed egg shells, gravel, coffee granules, salt and ash. They will discourage slugs and snails.
- Carry out a snail hunt (great with younger classes) in the school garden, place all snails in a bucket and release them outside the grounds.
- Use organic slug pellets on young seedlings. They are made of 'ferrous phosphate' – use them sparingly and as part of an integrated slug control approach.



5

Pests and Predators

- **Greenfly/Aphids:** Predator; ladybirds (encouraged by planting nettles). To deter, spray the whole affected area with diluted ecological washing up liquid or un-diluted vinegar.
- **Mice:** Predator; cats, birds of prey. Mice may eat beans and peas if direct sown so start them in pots inside.
- **Caterpillars:** Predator; song birds, hedgehogs, frogs, shrews (encourage with wild areas, bird feeders and nest boxes). To treat, pick off (and identify) then put into hedges.
- **Leatherjacket (larvae of Daddy Long Legs):** Predator - song birds, hedgehogs, frogs, shrews. Found in the soil (eats through roots). Pick off and throw into hedges.
- **Carrot Root Fly:** Predator; song birds. Protect by covering carrot bed with 450mm high netting or fleece. Plant carrots high up e.g. in barrel.



6

Research projects

Maths – count snails gathered in the snail hunt and carry out another hunt after a week to compare and contrast results.

SESE – identify insects in the garden, investigate food chains of pests and predators, and research the food web of the vegetable garden.

Local Heritage – What pests did our ancestors have in their gardens?

Geography – does soil type affect types of pests in the garden?

