



CREATE A BUG HOTEL!

Bugs love an untidy garden! Piles of dead wood and leaves lying around the place are a source of food to some bugs and provide shelter for others. For many bugs a heap of autumn leaves is the ideal place to hibernate through the winter.



If you have a garden with no room for a bug-friendly patch of untidiness, why not make a bug hotel out of a 'tidy' leaf pile? All you need is:

- Plastic mesh or chicken-wire
- Garden string/wire
- A flat piece of wood
- A pile of dead leaves

HOW TO MAKE IT

1. **Make a tube:** Most garden centres sell chicken-wire or plastic mesh by the metre. For our bug hotel we bought a one metre length of green plastic mesh, curled it into a tube and tied it in place using four twists of plastic covered garden wire.
2. **Put sticks through the tube at the bottom:** take some dead plant stems or twigs and poke them through the sides of the cylinder at the bottom. The twigs overlap to form a mesh which stops the leaves falling out of the bottom if you pick it up; it also stops the leaves touching the ground and helps to stop them getting damp.
3. **Fill the tube:** with the twigs in place you can fill the cylinder with dead leaves
4. **Give it a lid:** put a piece of wood on top to stop the rain getting in (the wood has to be heavy so it won't blow away).
5. **Top it up:** as the leaves in the hotel dry-out they will shrink, so try to keep some extra ones to top-up the tube.
6. **Secure it:** if your garden is very windy it might be an idea to make some v-shaped staples out of coat-hanger wire and use them to pin the bottom of the cylinder to the ground.

Once you have made your hotel put it in a quiet corner of the garden - preferably somewhere in the shade. As the nights start getting colder, bugs will find your hotel and use it as a safe dry place to hibernate.