

# Mini-Beasts



If you have any questions or want to send any photos please feel free to email me:

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## MAKING A BUG HOUSE

Help the wildlife in your garden and build an insect home in your garden.

There are some ideas below.



## DRAWING OR PAINTING

Snails and butterflies are great to draw or paint. I have added some examples below of the different ways they have been represented in art.

The method of painting half the butterfly on one side of piece of paper, and folding it over to create the other half is lots of fun.



## BUG HUNT

If you have a garden go out and have a look around for some mini-beasts. What do you find and where did you find them?

If you would like to you can use one of the sheets to record what you find.

If you collect any don't forget to place them back where you found them.



## BUTTERFLY CAKES

There is a recipe below. You can decorate them traditionally or add some patterns.

There are lots more ideas online, so please feel free to have a look and do something different.



## SORTING BUGS

There is a resource in the blog that you can print out. You cut out the pictures and sort them into groups.

Examples for sorting:

Number of legs  
Flying/non flying



## Make the life cycle of a butterfly

Draw or make a collage of the life cycle of a butterfly.

It is great to start off by reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. If you don't have the book, there is a link on the picture to a YouTube video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75NQG-Sm1YY>



## Make a Mini Beast

There is a page below with lots of ideas. Most contain items that would be found in your recycling.



## Making a bug house

### **What you will need**

#### **You can choose any of the following:**

Old wooden pallets  
Strips of wood  
Straw  
Moss  
Dry leaves  
Woodchips  
Old terracotta pots  
Old roofing tiles  
Bricks, preferably those with holes through them  
Old logs  
Bark  
Pine cones  
Sand  
Soil  
Hollow bamboo canes  
Dead hollow stems cut from shrubs and herbaceous plants  
A sheet of roofing felt  
Planks of wood  
Whatever else you can find - preferably natural materials

**Choose a suitable site.** It needs to be level and the ground firm.

You'll get different residents depending on where you place your hotel, as some like cool, damp conditions and others (such as solitary bees) prefer the sun. If you have vegetable beds, keep it a good distance away from them.

**The basic structure.** You will need a strong, stable framework that's no more than a metre high!

Old wooden pallets are perfect for a large hotel as they're sturdy and come with ready-made gaps. Start by laying some bricks on the ground as sturdy corners. Leave some spaces in between the bricks – try creating an H-shape. Add three or four layers of wooden pallets on top of your bricks. If you leave larger ends, you're more likely to attract hedgehogs.

You can also make a smaller structure, depending on the wood and space you have.



**Fill the gaps.** The idea is to provide all sorts of different nooks and crannies, crevices, tunnels and cosy beds.

Include:

dead wood and loose bark for creepy crawlies like beetles, centipedes, spiders and woodlice

holes and small tubes (not plastic) for solitary bees made out of bamboo, reeds and drilled logs

larger holes with stones and tiles, which provide the cool, damp conditions frogs and toads like – if you put it in the centre you'll give them a frost-free place to spend the winter (they'll help eat slugs)

dry leaves, sticks or straw for ladybirds (they eat aphids) and other beetles and bugs

corrugated cardboard for lacewings (their larvae eat aphids, too)

dry leaves which mimic a natural forest floor

you can even put a hedgehog box into the base of the hotel.

**Add a 'roof.'** When you think you've gone high enough, making sure the stack remains stable, put a roof on to keep it relatively dry. Use old roof tiles or some old planks covered with roofing felt.

You could even give it a 'green' or 'brown' roof by putting a bit of rubble or gritty soil on top. Only plants that love dry conditions cope up there, but some wild flower seeds could arrive on the breeze and take root.

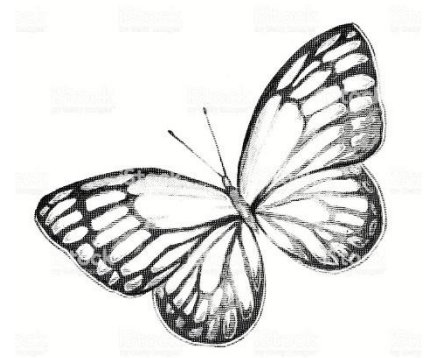
Surround your hotel with nectar-rich flowers – essential food for butterflies, bees and other pollinating insects.

If you want, choose a name for your hotel and put a sign up outside. Children will get a thrill from making their first home.

Most activity in your hotel is likely to be after dark in the warmer months, so go out with a torch to see who is popping in and out.



Drawing or painting



## Butterfly cakes

### Ingredients

#### **For the cakes**

- 100g/3½oz unsalted butter, softened
- 100g/3½oz caster sugar
- 2 free-range eggs, at room temperature, lightly beaten
- 100g/3½oz self-raising flour
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp fine salt
- 1 tbsp milk

#### **For the buttercream**

- 125g/4½oz unsalted butter, softened
- 200g/7oz icing sugar, sifted
- 1 tbsp milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- lemon curd or jam for the topping (optional)
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### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4 and line a 12-hole bun tin with 12 paper fairy cake cases. (Or for deep American-style cupcakes, line a 6-hole muffin tin with larger muffin cases.)
2. Place the softened butter in a large bowl then beat with an electric hand-whisk until pale and fluffy. Gradually add the sugar and continue to beat until fully combined.
3. Add a little of the beaten egg to the butter mixture, then whisk again. Gradually add the egg, little by little, whisking after each addition. It's important to go slowly here, as adding too much egg at once can cause the mix to split. If it does split, simply add a tablespoon of the flour and whisk until the batter is smooth again.
4. Sift the flour into the bowl. Using a large metal spoon or spatula, fold the flour into the cake mix.
5. Add the vanilla and the salt and stir to combine. Add the milk to get the cake mix to a soft dropping consistency, where a heaped spoonful of mixture falls off the spoon after tipping it for few seconds.
6. Using two dessert spoons (one to scoop and the other to push the mix into the tin), fill the paper cases half full with the batter, filling them equally.
7. Bake the fairy cakes for 15 minutes in the middle of the oven, until golden-brown and the cakes spring back when pressed lightly. (Bake cupcakes for 18-20 minutes.)
8. When cool enough to handle, lift the cakes onto a cooling rack and leave to cool completely. The cakes can be frozen for up to a month, or will keep fresh in an airtight tin for a few days.
9. To make the buttercream, put the butter into a large bowl and beat with electric hand beaters until smooth and creamy. Sift in the icing sugar, then work it into the butter, starting slowly at first, then beating more vigorously once all the sugar is combined. Add the milk and the vanilla, then beat until creamy and smooth. If the mixture is too stiff, add a little more milk. You can colour the buttercream at this stage.
10. To make butterfly cakes, cut the top off each cake using a small serrated knife – angling the knife in slightly so that you make a concave cut. Cut the tops in half, to make two 'wings'. Spread or pipe a heaped teaspoon of buttercream into the dip you have made in the top of each cake, and spoon on a little lemon curd or jam. Place the wings into the buttercream, and dust with a little icing sugar.



**Make a mini-beast**

