

BUG HOTELS

FOUR-STAR LODGINGS FOR BEETLES, BEES,
AND OTHER CREEPY-CRAWLIES!

BY GERRY BISHOP

Most people want as few bugs around as possible, right? So why do some folks build backyard “hotels” for them?

People build these shelters because many kinds of bugs can be good for their gardens. They want to encourage the “good” bugs to stick around—even multiply.

Some bugs, such as beetles, bees, and butterflies, carry pollen from flower to flower, which helps plants to develop seeds and fruits. And some, including tiny, non-stinging wasps, help keep pesky plant-eating insects under control.

WILD BEE NURSERY

Honeybees live in big groups called colonies. But most other bee species live alone. Each female makes her own nest—usually in a hole in the ground, in a piece of wood, or in a hollow twig or stem. But sometimes there aren’t enough “natural” places for these bees to use. The people who built this hotel have drilled holes of different sizes into logs, sticks, and even bricks.



WELCOME, ALL!

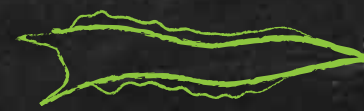
There aren’t many places in this hotel for bees: They love neat, round holes. But see those other nooks and crannies? They make great hidey holes for butterflies, beetles, and insects called lacewings.

UNWANTED GUEST?

Check out the center of this hotel. A bird called a flycatcher has found a great place for a nest. Let’s just hope she doesn’t catch too many of the other guests for dinner!



BLICKWINKEL/ALAMY (16); PAUL MIGUEL/FLPA/MINDEN PICTURES (17T); ARTERRA PICTURE LIBRARY/ALAMY (17B); "BUG" ART BY GREG HUDSON





HODGE-PODGE LODGE

Here's a hotel that's made of all kinds of stuff. And that's a good thing, because you never know what it takes for a guest to feel at home. Flower pot, anyone? How about a bundle of straw?

ALMOST READY

Just a few more sticks, and this hotel will be open for business!



ROOMS WITH A VIEW

Bugs in this hotel tower go to great heights to find rooms that are right—and with views that delight!



BUILD A BUG HOTEL

BY MICHELE REYZER; PHOTO BY MARK GODFREY

Here's a simple insect inn you can make that will welcome bugs to your yard or garden!

WHAT YOU NEED

- clean and empty plastic bottles (two-liter size works best)
- scissors
- stapler
- hole punch
- long strand of twine
- items to fill the hotel, such as twigs, leaves, bark, rocks, pine cones, broken clay pot pieces, hollow bamboo canes or straws
- mesh produce bag (optional)



WHAT YOU DO

1. To create the hotel's compartments, cut the bottom five inches off each bottle. (Ask an adult for help.) Staple the bottle "cups" together as shown or create your own arrangement.

2. To hang the hotel, punch two holes about an inch apart in each cup. Thread twine through the holes until you have wrapped it all the way around the cups. Tie the ends of the twine in a knot at the top.

3. Tightly fill each compartment with the items you have collected. To prevent some of the objects from falling out, you can cover one or more of the cups with a piece of the mesh bag.

TIP: As you read on page 17, non-stinging bees love neat, round holes. To attract more bees, you can drill holes into a block of wood and add it to your hotel. Just make sure the wood isn't "pressure-treated" with chemicals.

SHOW US! We want to see your bug hotels! Send your photos to *Ranger Rick*; 11100 Wildlife Center Dr.; Reston, VA 20190-5362; E-mail: rick@nwf.org. We enjoy all your letters and photos, even though we can publish only a few in the magazine. All letters and photos become the property of National Wildlife Federation.

