



Week One – My Outdoors Challenge

Suggestions for this week are to cover parts of the “*My Outdoors Challenge*” badge. I have listed below three different activities that could be conducted either inside the home or in the garden.

1. Take part in an activity using natural things like leaves, bark, twigs, sand or rocks; in order to complete this element, your child could do the following:-
 - Bark rubbing;
 - Painting rocks; or
 - Making decorations for the garden.
2. Point out and name five different types of animal, insect, bird or fish that you might find near where you live. Find out about the food they eat and the places they might live.
3. Make something to help animals in the wild. It could be a bird box/feeder or a bug hotel (more information below).

Please ensure that hands are washed thoroughly once activities are completed.



Bird Feeder

What you need

- Plastic bottle, yogurt pots or milk cartons (make sure they are clean and dry)
- Wire or string
- Bird seed
- Scissors

Step by step guide

1. Cut a hole in the side of the bottle, pot or carton that is large enough to allow a free flow of seeds, but not large enough to allow the seeds to fall out as soon as the wind hits
2. Make a few small holes in the bottom of the feeder to allow any rainwater to drain out
3. Hang with wire, or even string from a tree or your washing line
4. If your feeder starts to wear out or the food in it goes mouldy, please recycle it
5. Remember to keep your feeders well stocked.



Bug Hotel

What you need

You can get creative when making bug hotels, however some ideas for materials are as follows:-

Recycled stuff

- Wooden pallets
- Plastic bottles
- Broken bricks and tiles
- Stone chippings
- Plant pots
- Corrugated cardboard
- Drainpipes

Natural materials

- Logs, twigs, pine cones
- Rotting wood
- Spare rolls of turf
- Dry leaves
- Bark
- Hollow plant stems
- Straw and hay
- Bamboo canes

How to build your insect home

1. **Choose a good spot for your insect home.** Firstly, because most insects like cool, moist conditions, a shady area next to a hedge or under the tree works well. Secondly, make sure the home has a firm base, because it will end up quite heavy. Thirdly, choose a spot where the insect home can remain for at least a month.
2. **Create a structure.** This could be by creating a small box from wood, or to keep things simple, using a plant pot, empty tin or plastic bottle. Remember you can secure the structure with string, wire or pull ties if you need to.
3. **Fill in the gaps with other materials.** There are no rules as to how you fill the empty structure, but here are some ideas to attract different insects:
 - **Dead wood** makes a great home for wood-boring beetles, such as the majestic stag beetle, and their larvae. It also supports fungi, which can break down the natural material. Centipedes and woodlice can burrow under the bark.
 - **Hollow stems, canes, and holes** drilled into blocks of wood are all ideal spots for solitary bees to lay their eggs. These bees help pollinate flowers (so helping your plants produce vegetables) in the garden. Because solitary bees like sunny spots, place these on the sunniest side of the insect home.
 - **Stone and tiles** provide lovely cool, moist conditions for frogs and newts. They might be best lower down, on the shadiest side of the insect home.
 - **Hay and straw** give insects a good place to burrow and hibernate.
 - **Dry leaves** provide homes for insects, just like leaf litter on the forest floor. Ladybirds hibernate here over winter – and they're great for eating aphids in the garden.
 - **Rotting wood and bark** is where beetles, centipedes, spiders and woodlice love to be. Because woodlice and millipedes break down woody plant material, they're an important part of your garden recycling system.
 - **Corrugated cardboard rolled up inside a lemonade bottle** will attract lacewings, which are really good at eating pests.

