

WILDLIFE STACKS

A good wildlife garden should provide natural places for wild creatures to live. As a gardener, you can achieve this by how you manage your plants and by providing features such as dead and decaying wood.



Hedgehog



Common frog

WHAT IS A WILDLIFE STACK?

What many types of wildlife really need are those naturally occurring nooks, crannies and rotting tree trunks that provides all the housing space they might need. For those of us who really can't provide the real thing, a wildlife stack is a good alternative and they can give us a glimpse of creatures we otherwise might not get to see. To improve the chances of your efforts being rewarded it is important you provide plenty of pollen and nectar-rich plants.

Made of recycled materials, stacks imitate the natural features required by wildlife. They are especially suitable for the 1,500 or so invertebrates regularly found in the average garden, many of which help control garden pests such as aphids. Stacks may also provide refuges for amphibians and hedgehogs.

A wildlife stack will give you the opportunity to watch these fascinating creatures close up, and begin to understand how they behave. You'll also be able to show your friends and family, and maybe then they can provide this wonderful wildlife a home in their garden too!

For more ideas please visit:

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/hfw/advice/21>

CREATING A WILDLIFE STACK

1. Most invertebrates prefer moist areas of dappled shade. Choose somewhere easily visible, and perhaps close to a hedge, shrub bed or pond.



2. Make sure the site has a firm and level surface to build on. Be creative and provide lots of nooks and crannies, using whatever natural materials (eg leaves, twigs) you have to hand.



3. Arrange some bricks on the ground on their side. Butt a pair of bricks together, leaving a small gap before the next pair, or try creating 'H' shaped cells of bricks and fill the space between with woodchips and leaf litter.



4. Lay a wooden pallet or strips of wood across the top of your bricks, then construct the next level. Each layer should be around 100 mm deep. Continue to fill some gaps with hay, straw, dry leaf litter and wood chippings.



5. Keep the stack dry with roof tiles or wooden board covered in roofing felt or polythene. On top of this, place crushed bricks, concrete or limestone chippings and plant with sedum or other low growing, drought tolerant plants.



6. An alternative, using off-cuts of 18 mm board, is to create a rigid box with different sized 'pigeon holes'. Use your recycled materials to fill each of the compartments. Give the roof a shallow enough pitch to allow it to be planted.



MATERIALS

The following list is for guidance and is in no way exhaustive:

- pallets or strips of wood
- pen casings and drinking straws
- cardboard tubes and corrugated card
- straw, hay, dry leaf litter and moss
- plant pots
- plastic and ceramic pipes of various diameter
- roofing felt
- stones
- bricks and concrete blocks, preferably with holes
- roof tiles
- hollow bamboo canes
- dead hollow stems cut from shrubs and herbaceous plants
- pine cones
- logs drilled with various sized holes
- crushed brick and concrete rubble
- succulent plants

For more ideas go to www.rspb.org.uk/hfw/advice/21

Front: illustration by Chris Shields (RSPB). Photos by Nigel Blake and Jodie Randall (rspb-images.com). Back: Photos by David Levenson (rspb-images.com) Bryan Bland, John Day and Christine McDowell (RSPB).

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