

CONSTRUCTION

BOX 1:

Building a Hedgehog House

a blended learning activity for primary aged children at home or in school, developed by

NASCENT



PLACE 21

Connections, Qualifications
and Character Strengths



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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSTRUCTION BOXES:

Over the last few years, scientists at West Suffolk College have been developing “science boxes” for primary schools, to ensure that children of all ages get to do practical, hands-on science throughout their school life. In response to these unusual times, since March 2020 the science boxes have been adapted to be used for “blended learning” this means they are now suitable not just for schools but also for carrying out in the home, they became “virtual” science boxes.

We are now delighted to begin providing virtual Construction Boxes: using the same simple, easy to read portfolio format with concise instructions, curriculum links and further guidance pathways.

Unlike science, construction is not a part of the primary curriculum, however practical construction projects such as this do encompass many areas of the curriculum such as numeracy and mathematics, language and literacy, science and working scientifically, art and design.

While all the construction box projects can be carried out by a single child, they are designed for groups giving pupils the opportunity to collaborate in a work-like project where a variety of skill sets are needed.

This is the “portfolio” and it contains all the information needed to carry out the activity at home or in school. Where appropriate, notes for non-teachers such as parents and carers are highlighted in yellow to further support home delivery.

SUMMARY:

This is a simple summary of the activity and what the children are going to be learning about

The children are going to build a hedgehog house using readily available materials. There are many designs for hedgehog houses, this portfolio details how to make a simple, robust one without the need for too much adult intervention and is based around the example provided by the National History Museum REFERENCE: <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/how-to-make-a-hedgehog-house.html>.

Why build a hedgehog house?

REFERENCE: <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-hedgehog-home>

Sadly, there are fewer than 1 million hedgehogs left in the UK. They need homes just like humans, so making one for them is a great way to encourage them into your garden or the outside space around your school.

The once common hedgehog is declining in number – since 2002, we have lost around 30% of our hedgehog population. It is becoming increasingly reliant on urban and suburban gardens; indeed, urban populations of hedgehogs have increased by up to a third, while rural populations have halved. This decline is likely caused by the loss and degradation of our habitats due to pressures such as development, agricultural intensification and climate change.

So, whether you live in town or country, you can help to look after garden wildlife like hedgehogs by providing food, water and shelter.

KIT LIST:

This page describes all the "kit" that you'll need, as well as any hazards that may arise from using it... in other words, what you're going to need and what to be careful about

You will need?

- a sheet or planks of wood or a paving slab (around 50cm square)
- about 30 bricks
- logs and sticks
- dry leaf litter - dead plant material such as leaves, twigs and bark that have fallen to the ground
- a spade / trowel
- gardening gloves

Potential Hazards

Children should be careful when carrying bricks, logs and wood as they may cause injury when dropped. Wood may also give rise to splinters. Dried leaves and grass may contain thistles or brambles. Gardening gloves are encouraged.

This is what you
are going to do 😊

ACTIVITY OUTLINE:

REFERENCE: <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/how-to-make-a-hedgehog-house.html>.

1. Decide where to position the hedgehog house:

Before starting work on the construction, children must consider where they are going to position the hedgehog house, the space should be:

- Flat, this will make the structure more stable
- Quiet, chose an area that can be left undisturbed
- Shady, don't place it in the centre of an open space, an area close to a garden/school boundary is ideal, such as at the foot of a wall or fence.

2. Create the base/floor:

Use a spade or trowels to dig a shallow hole, around 5 to 10 centimetres deep. The area will depend upon the dimensions of the roof to be used, this should be measured to ensure the hole is not too large to safely support the roof. Fill this hole with a thin layer of dry leaf litter - dead plant material such as leaves, twigs and bark that have fallen to the ground.

3. Construct the walls:

Lay bricks around the outer edge of the hole, making sure to leave a gap for the entrance. An entrance tunnel, about the width of a brick, will prevent predators from being able to reach a hibernating or nesting hedgehog.

Build up the walls by placing one or two layers of bricks on top of the first, overlapping them so the structure is stable. For the tunnel, you might use two bricks across the gap to make a roof.

4. Add the roof:

Place your roofing material (wood or paving slab) on top of the brick walls to create the roof. Stack logs on top of the roof to weigh it down.



5. Camouflage:

Add more logs at the sides of the house for camouflage and to help attract insects, which are an important food source for hedgehogs. You could also add leaf litter and small twigs for more camouflage.

6. Observe:

The house is now ready for a hedgehog to move in, a hedgehog may use a house like this for hibernating through winter or for nesting and raising a litter of hoglets in summer, but how will you know if a hedgehog is in residence?

You could of course use a webcam with night vision and wireless connectivity to the school's IT system, or you might simply leave a small light twig across the entrance - if it moves, you'll know an animal has likely visited the house.

You might also sprinkle a light covering of sand around the entrance to the house and quietly look for footprints. Without soft sand hedgehog footprints can be hard to spot, but they are quite distinctive in their long, narrow shape. They have three toes that point forward and two that go out to the sides.



CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS:

Construction is not part of the primary curriculum, but as described in this brief list, it links many core areas

Numeracy and mathematics:

The building materials can be counted, measured and calculations made as to quantity and overall dimensions made depending upon the ability of the pupils.

Language and literacy:

When evaluation of the building materials is being considered reference might be made to the popular fairy tale "The Three Little Pigs". A selection of poems about hedgehogs can be found at <https://suffolkprickles.org/hedgehog-learning-materials/>

Science:

An investigation into the natural habitat of the hedgehog and for older children discussion around the decline of the species and its relationship to habitat. Consideration of the eating habits of the hedgehog might lead on to the proximity of a bug hotel.

Art and design:

While the hedgehog will not be concerned with aesthetics, the humans around might be, how can the children design the house and arrange the materials in such a way that it looks pleasing to humans but is still functional for hedgehogs.

FIND OUT MORE: USEFUL LINKS

These links of short videos and written resources should help you and your children understand more about the construction box activity

WEB RESOURCE: The national curriculum in England Key stages 1 and 2

The entire national curriculum for primary schools as a PDF or Word Document

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>

WEB RESOURCE: Hedgehog based learning materials

A selection of poems, word search games and other learning resources from a Suffolk based charity <https://suffolkprickles.org/hedgehog-learning-materials/>

WEB RESOURCE: The Wildlife Trusts, How to Build a Hedgehog Home

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-hedgehog-home>

WEB RESOURCE: The Wildlife Trusts, How to Build a Hedgehog Home from a plastic container

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/SIMPLE-HEDGEHOG-HOUSE.jpg>

WEB RESOURCE: RSPB, How to Build a Hedgehog Home

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/giveahogahome/>

WEB RESOURCE: The Woodland Trust, How to Build a Hedgehog Home from a wooden wine crate

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2019/08/how-to-make-hedgehog-house/>

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