

# BUG BOXES

## CONSTRUCTION

Build any desired size and shape box with partitions and a back, 50 to 150mm deep. Alternatively, used old drawers or wooden containers fixed together.

Create divider partitions for the different materials to be placed in the box. Ideally add a 'roof' with an overhang to protect from rain and direct sunlight. Pack each compartment tightly with infill material to attract the type of insects desired, for example :-

- (a) round straws, bamboo canes, holes drilled in wood - for solitary bees
- (b) pinecones (covered with chicken wire) - for ladybirds
- (c) corrugated cardboards - for lacewings

For leafcutter bees, drill holes in wood blocks that are 6mm wide and 50mm-100mm deep.

For mason bees, drill holes in wood blocks that are 8mm wide and 150mm deep,

Try to space holes at least 20mm apart, and never drill entirely through the wooden blocks.

## BUG HOTELS -

Construct using pallets stacked and free standing on the ground and insert the various infill material in layers to suit the different insects and wildlife.

These require a larger area on the ground and ideally positioned in a 'wild' area of the gardens with a goov variety of plants and flowers.

## WHAT SORT OF BUGS WILL LIVE IN THE BUG BOX?

**SOLITARY BEES.** There are over 200 species including Mason bees, Mining bees and Leaf-cutter bees.

**LACEWINGS** and their larvae consume large numbers of aphids and other garden pests.

**LADYBIRDS** and their larvae are champion aphid munchers! The adults hibernate over winter, they need dry sticks or leaves to hide in.

**BUMBLEBEES.** Every spring queen bumblebees search for a site to build a nest and start a new colony. An upturned flowerpot in a warm sheltered place might be used.

**BEETLES, MAYFLIES, HOVERFLIES** and **SPIDERS** are just a few of the hundreds of bugs that would live in the hotel!

## BUG BOXES v BUG HOTELS

Bug boxes are smaller structures, usually fixed to fences, walls, sheds, trees, etc.

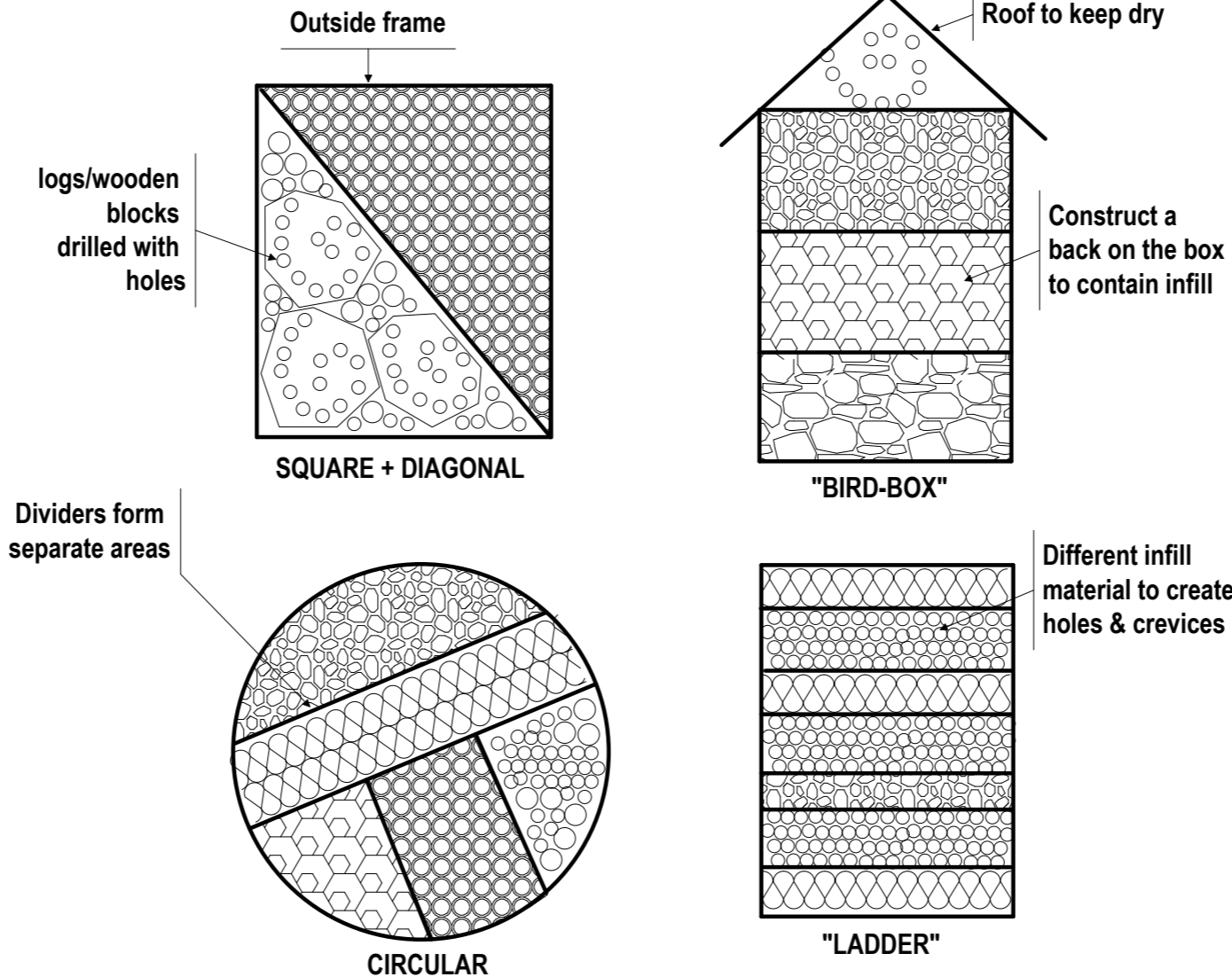
Bug Hotels are much larger free standing structures e.g. stacked pallets with larger scale infill nesting materials including bricks with holes, tiles, larger logs, branches, etc.

## LOOK OUT FOR

Some birds, such as woodpeckers, attack the blocked-up holes looking for insect larvae to eat. Protect your inhabitants by covering the front of the hotels with chicken wire if you see a lot of birds around. It won't affect the insects coming and going.

## DESIGN SHAPES

Create any desired shape or size container to form the box. Best with overhanging roof to stop rain and keep dry. Enclose the back to contain the infill material.



## FILLINGS

- Small uneven strips of wood
- Small tubes and drinking straws
- Cardboard tubes and corrugated card
- Straw, hay, dry leaf litter and moss
- Small plastic plant pots
- Small plastic and ceramic pipes of various diameters
- Small irregular stones
- Hollow bamboo canes
- Dead hollow stems cut from shrubs and herbaceous plants
- Pinecones
- Logs or wood blocks drilled with various sized holes
- Dead wood or twigs

You can make a home for lacewings by rolling up a piece of corrugated cardboard and putting it in a waterproof cylinder, such as an old lemonade bottle.

## LOCATION OF THE BOX/HOTEL

Keep outside in a sheltered position in dappled shade, and avoid the direct sun.

Bees prefer a sunnier spot.

Hotels should be hung about 1.5m from the ground and protected from driving rain.

Fix to trees, walls and fences with nails, screws or strapping.

## NECTAR PRODUCING PLANTS

Planting nectar producing plants and flowers around your habitat will provide essential food and attract butterflies, bees and many other flying insects.

## WHY BUG HABITATS?

Why do we need to encourage them?

Our gardens are home to a huge range of living creatures.

It's estimated that the average garden could hold 2000 insect species!

They play a very important role in the garden: eating pests, pollinating plants, contributing to the ecosystem and attracting other wildlife like birds.

They provide a nesting place in summer, hibernating environment in winter, with insects emerging in spring ready to help out in the garden!

They help develop a diverse localised insect ecosystem.

The word 'hotel' is perhaps misleading because this isn't short-term accommodation – some insects can spend up to nine months living in them.

These structures replicate the natural habitats of insects.