

Mini-beasts and Habitats in your Garden

What are Mini-beasts?

“Mini-beasts” is a term that people use to refer to the small insects and other invertebrates that are commonly found around schools and homes. It includes animals such as spiders, ants, butterflies, bees, wasps, flies, woodlice, beetles, centipedes and many others! All animals need a place to live and mini-beasts are no different. With this worksheet you can explore the homes or ‘habitats’ that different types of mini-beasts like to inhabit.

Activity: Explore and Make Habitats for Mini-beasts

Objective: To observe over time the numbers characteristics and behaviour of mini-beasts

Materials: Old logs, bricks, tape measure, pencils and paper, jars/clear trays for collecting insects, old pillowcases and sticks.

Method:

Step 1: Existing Habitats

Begin by asking students if they think there might be any areas in the garden that could provide a home for any mini-beasts (e.g. spiders, ants, earthworms, woodlice etc). The students’ suggestions of existing habitats should be considered, and the locations examined (as described in Step 2).

Step 2: Observing the Mini-beasts

- Create a pitfall trap as described in the video
- Create a beating tray as described in the video and see what min-beasts you can collect.
- If you happen to have other equipment such as the pooter or sweep net described in the PowerPoint use those as well to collect mini-beasts.
- Use jars, white trays or bug-viewers for collecting the mini-beasts.
- Be sure to remove the animals very carefully
- Use identification guides to identify and study any mini-beasts found.
- Record all mini-beasts found.
- Students can take pictures of mini-beasts found and email them to me. I will do my best to try and identify them.
- Safely return mini-beasts to their ‘home’ after observation.
- Place any objects that were moved (e.g. rocks, logs) back in their original position.
- ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS after your investigation! NB!

Step 3: Creating a new habitat:

You can also help the students in creating a new habitat for mini-beasts in the garden using rocks, bricks or old logs.

You can make the habitat area as small or as large as you wish.

- Find a damp shaded well-protected area of the school grounds. - Spread the old logs and rocks in the area (if the weather has been dry recently, you should dampen the area with some water first).

- Leave the habitat for a few days (at least a week)

. - On your return, carefully lift up the rocks or logs to see if there are any minibeasts to be found.

- CARRY OUT STEP 2 ABOVE

Students can draw their favourite mini-beast and email me on a picture. My email address is kevindelahunty@ctyi.org

I hope the students enjoy the hunt for mini-beasts!