



Have fun experiencing the lives of minibeasts up-close

Minibeasts are found in areas like fields, gardens and water habitats and there are many different ways of collecting them. Why don't you try a minibeast hunt in your own garden, patio or balcony.

Children should be encouraged to use a plastic spoon to pick up creatures, as some minibeasts are very delicate.

Objectives:

- Children learn to treat living things with respect
- Children can identify minibeasts that live in the gardens using (if possible) a microscope/magnifying glass and identification key
- Children can also have fun drawing pictures of what they find



Preparation:

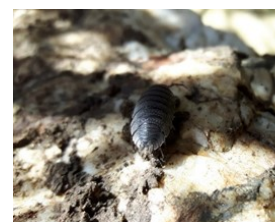
- One small paint brush, one plastic spoon per child, old bed sheet, one plastic sample pot (e.g. cleaned yogurt pot)
- One KC identification chart
- If you have a microscope, introduce children to focussing and illumination

Collection methods:

1. Garden floor – log turning

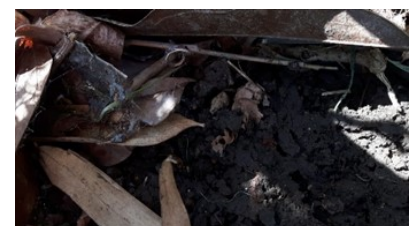
A great variety of minibeasts live in leaf litter and under logs and stones.

Encourage children to search under the logs and stones for minibeasts. Use the spoon to gently scoop up the minibeast and place them in clean pots.



Remind the children it is important to put back the logs exactly as they were found. All minibeasts should be returned to their habitat after examining.

A number of different minibeasts can go in one pot but large snails and slugs are best in pots by themselves as they will produce a lot of sticky slime that can cover and harm the other creatures.

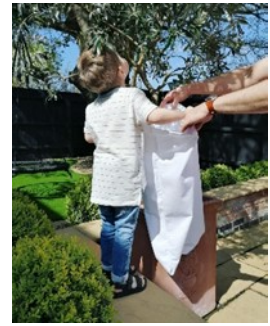


H & S – The children should lift and replace logs carefully, watching out for fingers and toes. Larger logs should be lifted by adults only.

2. Tree Beating

This method must be done with an adult

Find out which creatures live in the canopy of the trees in your garden with a tree beating. One child holds a beating sheet (old bed sheet) under a branch of a tree or a bush whilst an adult vigorously shakes the branch. Any minibeasts on the branch will fall on to sheet.



The minibeasts disturbed tend to be fast moving like spiders or can fly like lacewings



Respect for living things

- Explain to the children that they will be observing living things and we must respect them
 - Search for minibeast by carefully moving leaf litter under earthy habitats, with a paint brush
 - Gently move minibeast onto a plastic spoon using a paint brush
 - Observe for a short while
 - Return the minibeast to where it was found at the end of the investigation

Observing, identifying and drawing specimens

- If you have a microscope or magnifying glass, observe the minibeast closely
- Identify each minibeast using the Kids Country identification sheets
- Produce a labelled diagram of the minibeast specimen



Summary

- Children have handled minibeasts carefully
- Children have observed, identified and drawn minibeasts

