

School grounds focus:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How can we get there?
- Making the changes
- Using your grounds

Curriculum focus:

- Science
- Geography
- Environmental Studies
- Maths
- ICT

Purpose of this activity:

- To discover where mini beasts live
- To understand the habitats of mini beasts
- To create habitats that will attract more mini beasts

Equipment/materials needed:

- Hand lens or similar to spot and magnify mini beasts
- Record sheet (see over page)
- Leaf litter
- Old wood – branches and logs
- Bundles of twigs
- Old rocks and bricks
- Old plant pots
- A plastic bucket

Preparation:

- Go on a mini-beast hunt to find out what kind of habitats mini beasts like most.
- Identify key features of these habitats – for example dark, sheltered, damp (but not too wet) and mouldy – and fill in the record sheet (see over page).
- Discuss how these habitats can be recreated.

What to do:

Divide pupils into groups. They should go into the grounds and identify two suitable spaces where new homes for mini beasts could be built and left undisturbed. These could be marked on a map of the school grounds. Then provide the groups with the necessary material so they can construct different types of habitats themselves in their chosen spaces. They could, for example:


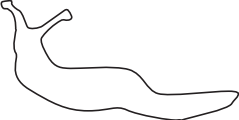






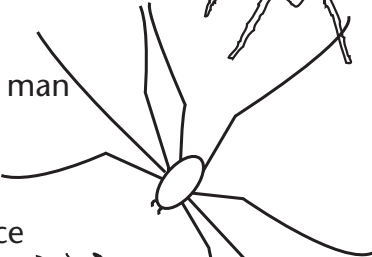
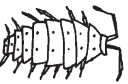

- build a log pile – leave a pile of logs and dead branches in one corner – preferably under some trees or shrubs where it's shady. Leave the wood to rot.

- make an insect box – take a bundle of twigs and tie together with a piece of string. Hang under the branch of a tree or to a railing.
- fill an old plant pot with leaf debris, turn upside down and position somewhere damp.
- create an informal rockery from a pile of rocks and bricks – especially good for insects in the winter months.
- make some holes in the sides of a plastic bucket and fill with wood chips and soil. Leave it somewhere quiet where it won't be disturbed, topping up with soil every now and again. This is a great habitat for stag beetles as well as lots of other insects.
- plant a small fruit tree in a pot and leave the fruit to rot.

Extensions:

- While on their mini-beast hunt the pupils could collect as many examples of mini beasts as possible and sort them into groups. The best way to do this is by counting their legs:
 - no legs:** worms, slugs and snails
 - six legs:** insects such as beetles, wasps, flies, butterflies and earwigs
 - eight legs:** spiders and harvestmen
 - 14 legs:** slaters and woodlice
 - More than 14:** millipedes and centipede
- Produce geographical presentations of their findings from their mini-beast hunt.
- Take photographs and or/make observational drawings or clay models of the mini beasts they find and create an exhibition.
- Use colour swatches to identify the colour of the animals and try to recreate that colour with paint, exploring why their animal may have adapted to be a certain colour.
- Talk about what other animals may come to these habitats to feed on the mini beasts.

Where are the mini beasts?

Mini beast	Habitat 1	Habitat 2
Worm		
Slug		
Snail		
Beetle		
Wasp		
Fly		
Earwig		
Spider		
Harvest man		
Woodlice		
Millipede		
Centipe	