

YounGnats Newsletter July 2015

Create our own nature display

Have you seen our Nature Table? We have a wonderful collection of antlers, beetles, feathers, dragonflies, snake skins and much, much more that we take to various events around the county to show what wildlife we have here in Bedfordshire.



These items have been collected over many years and donated to the BHNS for our collection. Some of these items are over 100 years old! They have been carefully labelled, stored and catalogued to make sure we know what we have. We can then select which items we want to include on our Nature Table when we take it around the different events.

We also select the best way to display each item. Some are just labelled, for example skulls but some are so fragile, such as dragonflies, which have to be stored and displayed carefully in boxes, otherwise they would break in no time.

Do you have your own collection of nature objects, some shells or feathers maybe, even a skull, if so, have you thought about creating your own Nature Display rather than leaving them hidden away?

Here are some ideas of things you can use to show off your collection -

- An old drawer or seed tray is excellent for a large collection and shoe boxes for smaller ones.
- Clear boxes and tubs e.g. model car boxes, hummus pots, are useful for protecting individual specimens.
- Bottles and jam jars are good for stones and shells.
- Tall bottles and plastic re-sealable bags for larger feathers.



Don't forget to use double-sided sticky tape to stick small things like flies to boxes, paper or material to line your boxes and labels so you know what it is and where you found it.

Why not give it a go, we would love to see your pictures, please upload them to www.bnhs.co.uk/youngnats/contactus/

Remember not to pick wild flowers or collect eggs!

Hedgehogs

Did you know?

- a baby hedgehog is called a hoglet
- a hedgehog has about 6000 spines
- hedgehogs protect themselves by rolling into a ball



Hedgehogs can be quite difficult to see as they sleep during the day, only moving about at night, this is called being nocturnal. They also hibernate, which is like sleeping from about October/ November to March/ April.

Summer is the time to ensure that any hedgehogs in your neighbourhood are growing well, so they are big enough to hibernate. These are some of the things you can do in your garden to help hedgehogs.

Hedgehogs can travel up to 2 km each night, so no single garden is large enough. If you have fences and gate, ensure there are holes at least 13cm in diameter for hedgehogs to move about.

Hedgehogs need somewhere to shelter during the day as well as to hibernate.



It is possible to buy or make hedgehog houses but they can also be made from a pile of logs or even just create a compost heap. These will also have lots of insect food



If there are no natural water sources or ponds in the neighbourhood a dish of water can be essential, especially in dry periods. If you do have a pond it needs a simple ramp so any hedgehogs which fall in can climb out. Hedgehogs eat slugs and snails which is why gardeners like hedgehogs but this natural food can be supplemented by offering meat based cat or dog food, crushed unsalted peanuts, mealworms or raisins.

Have you been to one of our YounGnats events? The next ones you may like to come along to are:

- Sunday 26th July – butterflies & dragonflies at Potton Wood, meet at 10.30am by the water tower TL247494.
- Saturday 1st August – dragonflies & other water related animals at Tiddenfoot Lake, Leighton Buzzard, meet at 10.30am in the car park SP913239
- Saturday 8th August – butterflies & chiltern gentian at Houghton Regis Chalk Pit, meet at 10am in Lake View off Houghton Road TL013233
- Sunday 27th September – dung beetle safari at Flitwick Moor, meet at 10am in car park at end of Folly Lane off Maulden Road MK45 5BW or TL045354

See www.bnhs.co.uk/youngnats/ for more details and remember to sign up for email updates so you get the latest information.