

Design a hedgehog hibernaculum – leader's notes

people's
trust for
endangered
species

Bringing the wild back to life

Essential information

Age range: 7-11

Group size: No max class size, groups of 3/4

Time needed: approx.1 hour

Curriculum links:

Science : Yr 2 Use of everyday materials.

Yr 3-6 Working Scientifically,
Yr 5 Properties and changes of materials.

Also links to Design and Technology

Setting: Classroom

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Background to activity

Children will design, make and test a 'hibernaculum' or hibernation nest for an imaginary hedgehog, with the aim of making it as well insulated as possible.

Materials needed

- Various containers and materials
- Sticky tape
- Plastic cup
- Thermometer
- Hot water
- Stopwatch

Running the activity

Some knowledge of hibernation and insulating materials needed prior to the activity. In small groups ask children to design a hedgehog home that will keep a hibernating hedgehog as warm as possible over the winter. They must think about which materials to use, from a selection provided, before making it. Once complete each home will be tested to see how successful it would be. Adult leaders will place a cup of warm water (at the same temperature for each home) with a thermometer in, in the middle of the home. After approx. 10 minutes they should check the temperature and record. Repeat for each group keeping variables the same. The group with the warmest water after this time wins.

Extension activities

- For higher levels, take readings every 2 minutes for up to 10 minutes and plot the results in a graph.
- Build a real hedgehog home- (see Hedgehog Homes activity) and record any activity.

