

Suitable for age 4+ with adult support

# MINIBEAST HUNT

## What is a minibeast and why are they important?

Minibeasts are also known as invertebrates (animals without backbones). This is a big group of animals including insects, spiders, earthworms and molluscs e.g. snails. They are all very important as plant pollinators and as a food source for birds, frogs and hedgehogs in the garden. The Museum has large collections of invertebrates which were collected by naturalists to study in the past.



You can encourage more minibeasts to visit your garden by making bug hotels, planting native wild-flowers, leaving some areas to grow wild, building ponds and growing trees.

## Equipment

*(not essential as you can still enjoy a minibeast hunt without collecting them)*

- Soft brush (needs to be gentle to sweep up minibeasts)
- Bug pot with lid to collect minibeasts (a clean yoghurt pot or glass jar would do)
- Magnifying glass
- Minibeast spotter guide
- White cloth or sheet (if you gently shake a bush with the white sheet underneath, bugs will fall onto it and be easier to spot and collect. Get an adult to help you with this task.)

## Staying Safe

- Always make sure an adult knows where you are and that young children are supervised.
- Remember some minibeasts can sting, e.g. wasps and bees. These and other flying insects should never be collected in bug pots. If you are scared of stinging insects its best to stay still and let them fly away.
- Don't sweep tiny minibeasts, e.g. greenfly into your pot as it can damage their bodies and wings. Remember minibeasts are living things and should be treated with care.
- Only collect one minibeast at a time in your pot. Some minibeasts will eat each other!
- Only keep minibeasts in bug pots for a short time.
- Always return minibeasts to where you collected them from.

## Going on a Minibeast Hunt

Let's go on a minibeast hunt in your garden or local park. Good places to spot minibeasts are the undersides of leaves, on flowers, on the bark of trees and hiding under small logs and rocks (always replace these after you have lifted them up for a look).

Use your minibeast spotter guide on the next page. How many different minibeasts can you spot? Tick them off as you find them.



# MINIBEAST SPOTTER GUIDE

Can you spot these minibeasts living in your park or garden?



Ant



Daddy Long Legs



Greenfly



Bee



Earthworm



Millipede



Beetle



Earwig



Shield Bug



Butterfly



House Fly



Slug



Caterpillar



Garden Spider



Wasp



Centipede



Garden Snail



Woodlouse