

For adults and children in the garden

Elf and fairy houses

Natural England wants to give a million children the chance to discover the outdoors. The natural world is a fascinating place to explore and our natural habitats together with the creatures and plants that live there can provide endless sources of fun. From your own back yard to the wilds of our national nature reserves, now is the time to make the most of the outdoors and go wild!

Together with Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield (www.goingwild.net), authors of Nature's Playground, Go Wild and Make it Wild (www.franceslincoln.com), we've produced these fantastic activity sheets to give you plenty of ideas of what you can get up to, what are you waiting for?



Are there fairies and elves living secretly at the bottom of your garden? A wildlife garden is likely to offer all sorts of hidey-holes and secret corners where children can disappear into imaginary worlds. Encourage them to use loose natural materials to make little houses and hideouts for elves and fairies, and let their imaginations run riot.

What you need

- Lots of imagination,
- A variety of loose natural materials such as twigs, pebbles, seeds etc.

Making elf houses

Elf houses can be built anywhere; this activity is all about making the most of whatever is available and working out how different objects might be used.

- Find a good spot for an elf house - maybe between tree roots, in a hollow stump, »



among a pile of stones or in a dip in the ground. The children need to choose their own place, somewhere that captures their imagination and has all the elements they feel are important. This is an ideal activity for the garden as the children can return to the game whenever they wish.

- Search for loose materials such as, twigs, moss, hazelnuts, beech mast, cones and acorns. There should be plenty of suitable materials available in a wildlife garden – it only takes a few twigs and stones to stimulate a lively imagination.
- Allow the children plenty of time to create whatever they wish, be it a fairy palace or an elf park.
- What else can children make for miniature people? How about little chairs or beds, or a table set for a fairy feast, or even clothes such as leaf dresses or suits of armour. Or how about a bow and arrow? This one, made from twigs, is only a few centimetres long; it really fires tiny arrows so it's just perfect for arming woodland elves.



They may even go on to make other things for elves and fairies, such as this miniature bows and arrows made from twigs and the tiny quiver, made out of a hollow umbellifer stem. Although only a few centimetres long, they really worked and were quite good enough to arm woodland elves!

Safety tips

- Don't let children collect fungi or poisonous berries.



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