



Earwi'GO: Mobile Homes

US
UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX



Earwigs are an important part of garden ecosystems, providing **pest control** and **pollination** services. They are omnivores and can cause minor damage to soft plants – for example by nibbling flower petals, causing unsightly damage – so we want to see if it possible to encourage earwigs to stay in more helpful places in your garden.

This is the second part of the **Earwi'GO!** project (<https://www.thebuzzclub.uk/earwig>) and will look at using the earwig hotels being tested in the first part to *move* earwigs. Earwigs do not travel very far, and while they do have wings, they are rare fliers.

Taking part

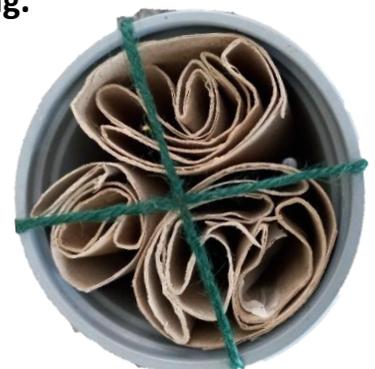
The project will run **June – October 2022**, and can be joined at any point. To take part, you will need:

- 1) To have **earwigs** present in your garden (or be fairly sure they are).
- 2) Some **flowering plants** (can be in pots), particularly soft flowers like dahlias.
- 3) A **tree**, away from the flowers. Ideally a fruit tree, but any tree should work.

Making the hotels

You will be making **two** earwig hotels, using **cardboard** as the filling. Folded toilet roll tubes work well for this, but any non-shiny cardboard will do. You will need a ~9cm **plant pot** (or similar container) for each hotel, and **string**.

- 1) Thread string **through** the pot bases, to tie them in place.
- 2) Trim toilet roll tubes so they do not stick out of the pots. Squash tubes in half and pack into the pot until snugly fitted.
- 3) Use string to secure the filling in place so it does not fall out when held upside down.

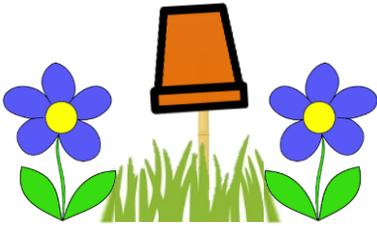


2x of these

Placing the hotels

Mobile home

Place **one hotel** on a stick (approx. 50cm tall) in the patch of flowers.



Tree hotel

Attach the **second** hotel to a tree where a branch meets the trunk, as close to the bark as possible. Please only do this on safely reachable branches!



The first hotel is the **mobile home**; second is the **tree hotel**.

For both hotels: the bottom of the pot should be angled upwards, or fully pointing upwards, to keep rain out.

Add a cover to the top if they start getting very wet (see right). Do the same thing to both hotels for consistency.

Make sure that the hotels are positioned in **shady places**, so they don't heat up in the day. Earwigs like cool and damp.



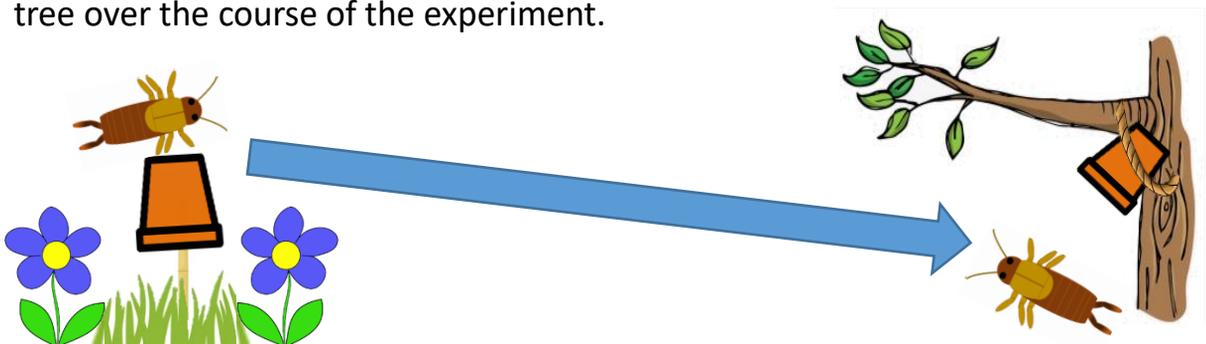
*Example of a lid
(J. Nell 2021).*

Moving the hotels

Once a week, you will need to **empty** and **count** each hotel (see overleaf for counting instructions). The difference is that this time you will release **invertebrates from the MOBILE home** hotel under the tree **where the TREE hotel** is (invertebrates from the tree hotel also go under the tree). Then put the empty mobile home back in the flowers.

The idea is to relocate any earwigs found in the flowers over into the environment around the tree. If they prefer being in a tree than being in the flowers, then hopefully they will stay there!

The tree hotel is to see if there is a change in the invertebrate population on the tree over the course of the experiment.



Data collection – counting invertebrates

Counting will be **once a week**, June – October. Your first count will be **one week** after you have installed the hotels.

To count a hotel:

- 1) Remove hotel from its position, and place into a tray / container that will let you catch and count any residents. Ideally near to the **TREE** hotel's tree, so even if invertebrates escape, they will escape into the right area.
- 2) Carefully remove the filling and put it on the tray.
- 3) Record any invertebrates that fall out (see recording sheet attached).
- 4) Place the filling material back inside. Don't try and put the invertebrates back.
- 5) Release **all** invertebrates on the ground beneath **the TREE hotel's tree**.
- 6) Replace hotels.

Earwigs are very distinctive, but please try and at least broadly identify any other invertebrates you find. **Photographs** are always useful to us, because we can either identify creatures ourselves, or pass them to experts on different types.

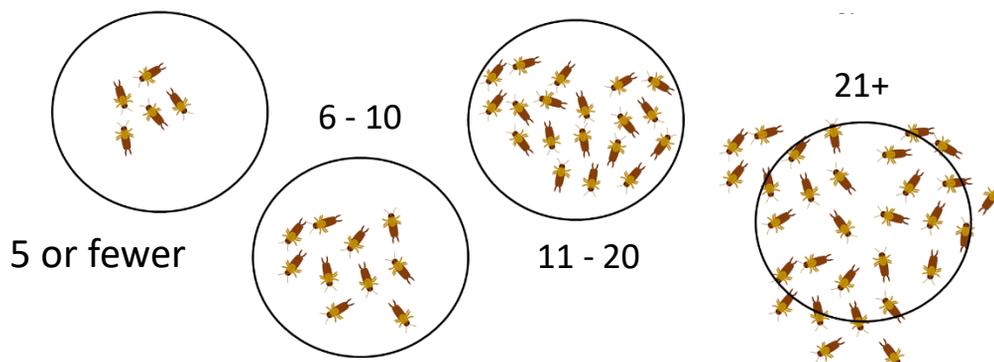
Please note - If you miss / are unable to do a week's count, please mark it as **skipped** on the recording sheet. It's important for us to know if a blank is 'no insects' or 'not counted', because the analysis needed is different.

Alternative counting methods

If your earwigs are too energetic or numerous to count easily, you could try:

- 1) Tip the earwigs into a tray and take a photo of them quickly before they escape, then count from that.
- 2) Do an **approximate** count. Ideally use categories of:
5 or less 6 – 10 11 – 20 21+

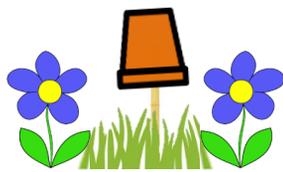
These might not seem big brackets, so to illustrate why we've chosen these categories, here are this many earwigs on 'trays':



Any questions? Contact us!

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[@The_Buzz_club](https://twitter.com/The_Buzz_club) 



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Recording sheet (print as many as you need)

Your name:

Recording month:

Type of tree used:

Date of each recording <i>(write)</i>	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
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Insects seen *(in counts / tallies)*. Please take photographs if you can!

MOBILE hotel	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Earwigs				
Other invertebrates <i>(Try to identify if possible, even if broad; e.g. 'beetle')</i>				

TREE hotel	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Earwigs				
Other invertebrates <i>(Try to identify if possible, even if broad; e.g. 'beetle')</i>				

Remember – you can do approximate counts. Use:

5 or less 6 – 10
11 -20 21+

If you miss / are unable to do a week's count, please mark it as **skipped**.