

What do I need?

Ceramic plant pot*

Acrylic paints

Paint brushes

2-3 stones

Varnish
(optional)

*The plant pot doesn't have to be in perfect condition. Using a slightly broken plant pot is even better because there is a gap for the toads to crawl through.



toad abode

What do I do?

Read the page 2 information to find out why toads are important creatures for the garden and how they can help us as gardeners. Then follow these instructions to make yourself a 'toad abode' to encourage toads into your garden!

Turn your plant pot upside down and paint a nice design onto it with your acrylic paints. You could paint a door and windows on it to make it look like a miniature house. Or you could paint lots of flowers on it to camouflage it in your garden. Once you've finished, leave the paint to dry for 1-2 hours.

To protect your design against the rain, paint a layer of varnish over your paint. Leave this to fully dry before putting it outside.

Take your toad abode out into your garden and look for the best location for toads to find it. Toads like dark and damp areas where they can hide from predators and where their bodies won't dry out.

Gather up some leaf litter and place this inside your toad abode to make it irresistible to any potential toads looking for a new home.

If your plant pot is not damaged, use the stones to prop it up a few inches on one side so that toads can crawl underneath.

Once you're happy with your location, try not to move the toad abode so that you don't disturb any toads which may have moved in. Keep an eye on it over the coming weeks to see if you have any occupants!

more about toads...

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A TOAD

1. A female toad lays long strings of eggs amongst the water weeds of ponds. A male toad will fertilise them as she does this.
2. The eggs hatch into tadpoles after about 10 days and begin to swim around the pond, feeding on the algae found there. As they grow, they begin to feed on small insects in the water.
3. At around 10 weeks old the tadpoles have grown into tiny toadlets and are ready to leave the pond.
4. Adult toads will migrate back to their breeding ponds every year in early summer.



HOW TO IDENTIFY A TOAD

Common toads are found almost everywhere in mainland Britain. They have olive-brown, warty skin which has a foul taste to any predators. Unlike frogs, toads crawl rather than hop and can spend longer lengths of time away from water. They spend much of the year feeding on insects in gardens, woodlands and hedgerows. Toads will hibernate during winter months and can be found under log piles, stones and over-turned flower pots!

THE IMPORTANCE OF TOADS

Toads are brilliant garden visitors to have because they act as natural pest controls. They feed on most insects, many of which may eat your plants such as beetles, caterpillars and slugs. Toads are also a sign that you're living in a clean environment, as their skin is susceptible to absorbing toxins. So if you see toads living in your garden, you know that it is environmentally clean and friendly! You can encourage toads and other amphibians into your garden by creating a wildlife friendly pond and leaving areas of leaf litter and logs for them to hibernate in, or by making a toad abode!

Visit *The Wildlife Trust* website for more information on how to build a wildlife pond.
<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-pond>