

GREENBURGH — WEEK 2

Week 2: Upcycled Bug Hotels

Micro-Habitats & Pollinators

Station Setup

At each table station (shared by a small group of 4–5 kids), set up the following:

- Cups: Place one 16 oz clear plastic coffee cup at each child's seat (no lids needed).
- Make sure to poke 3-4 drainage holes at the bottom of each cup before the activity starts.
- The Cardboard Pile: A pile of pre-cut cardboard strips (about 3 inches wide and 6–8 inches long).
- The Tape: One or two rolls of masking tape or painters tape for the table to share.
- The Shared Trays: 2 empty paper plates or trays in the center of the table for holding nature treasures.
- Note: Keep all permanent markers at your main instructor table to maintain safety and prevent distractions while building.

Lesson Plan

1. Introduction & Hook (3 Minutes)

- Introduce Yourself: "Hi everyone, welcome back! My name is Avika, and I am so excited for our activity today."
- The Question: "To start us off, who can tell me: what is your favorite bug, or what is a bug that you think is super cool?" (Take 3–4 quick answers from the kids).
- Explain: "Awesome! A lot of people think bugs are just pests, but they are actually some of the most important creatures on Earth. There are two big reasons we need them:
- They are nature's cleanup crew: Bugs like beetles and worms break down dead leaves and old food, turning them into fresh soil for trees to grow.
- They make our food grow: Bees, butterflies, and beetles pollinate flowers, which is how we get fruits, vegetables, and beautiful flowers! Today, we are going to build a 'Bug Hotel' using a plastic cup to give these tiny helpers a safe, dry place to live and keep our ecosystem healthy."

2. The Instruction Walkthrough (3 Minutes)

- Hold up an empty cup and a strip of cardboard and say: "To make our hotel, we need to make cozy little tunnels for the bugs. We will roll up these cardboard strips into tubes that are open on both ends. Then, we will head outside to find natural stuffing like twigs, pinecones, and moss to pack around the tubes so our guests are warm and dry!"

3. Nature Scavenger Hunt (10 Minutes)

- Take the kids outside to a nearby grassy or wooded area of the camp and give them a visual checklist of summer camp items to find.
- Pass out the checklists and say: "Everyone needs to bring back at least 3 of the items on this list I'm giving you. If you can find more, that's great!"
- Tip: 1st and 2nd graders love collecting moss and grass because it's easy to grab. Encourage the 3rd and 4th graders to look for those hollow stems and pinecones!

4. Building the Bug Hotels (17 Minutes)

Walk the kids through the steps altogether:

- Step 1 (The Cardboard Tubes): Have each child take a strip of cardboard. Show them how to roll it up tightly like a sleeping bag to make a tube (open at both ends). Help them secure the roll with a piece of tape.
- For 1st–2nd Graders: They might need you or a counselor to help hold the cardboard while they wrap the tape around it.
- For 3rd–4th Graders: Challenge them to make 2 or 3 tubes of different sizes (one thick, one thin)!
- Step 2 (The Core Rooms): First, instruct them to put some of their moss / grass at the bottom of their cup. Then, instruct them to place their cardboard tubes inside their cup, standing up on top of the moss / grass.
- Tell them to make sure the tubes aren't sticking out of the cup too much!
- Step 3 (The Summer Stuffing): Have the kids dump their collected items onto the table trays and start packing the empty spaces around their cardboard tubes using their twigs, pinecones, and bark.
- Step 4 (The Tight Fit): Instruct them to use the soft items—like the dry grass, moss, or acorn caps—to plug up any remaining small gaps.
- The Shake Test: Tell them to pack it tightly enough so that if they gently tilt the cup sideways, nothing falls out! If things slide around, they just need to wedge a few more pieces of moss or twigs in.

5. Decoration & Placement Game (10 Minutes)

- Pass out the markers: Bring the permanent markers to the tables.
- Decorate: Give the kids a few minutes to write "Bug Hotel", draw little ants, bees, or flowers on the outside of their clear cups.
- The Choice: Ask the kids if they want to take their hotel home or leave it at camp.
- For those leaving them at camp: Take them outside to find a quiet, sheltered spot (like nestled horizontally under a bush, near a tree root, or wedged in a fence) to set up their hotels.

- Clean-Up: Collect the markers. Have the kids place any leftover sticks or leaves back into a shared bin and stack unused cardboard.

6. Wrap Up & Future Steps (2 Minutes)

- "If you are taking your hotel home, place it lying down sideways (horizontally) in a quiet, leafy corner of your yard or balcony. Angle it slightly downward so summer rainstorms don't flood it. Keep an eye on it to see if any tiny guests have checked in!"

Checklist

- Little pinecones
- Thin sticks
- Tree bark on the ground
- Dry grass
- Dry moss
- Dry leaves on the ground
- Rocks and pebbles