Make a home for ladybirds

Here’s a simple family activity you can do together that will give ladybirds somewhere safe to shelter over the winter. When you’ve completed your ladybird house, place it somewhere sheltered (for example: behind a shed or under a hedge) in September and they can stay there safe until next April.

You need:
• About 50 pieces of hollow bamboo cane, 5–10 mm in diameter and 30 cm long. You could also use other hollow-stemmed plants, such as fennel.
• A 2-litre plastic drinks bottle
• Scissors
• Paper, glue, colouring pencils and sticky-backed plastic
• String, nails and a hammer.

1 Carefully cut the top and bottom off your plastic drinks bottle so that you have a tube about 25 cm long.

2 Take your pieces of bamboo cane and push them into the bottle so that the canes are packed tightly together.

3 You can decorate your bottle with pictures of ladybirds, aphids and flowers. Draw them on pieces of paper and colour them in. Place your pictures face down on the sticky-backed plastic and then wrap the plastic around your bottle.

4 Tie some string around both ends of the bottle. Hang your finished ladybird house in a sheltered position, not too high up from the ground. Behind a shed or under a hedge are good places.

5 Look at your ladybird house in winter to see if any ladybirds or other insects have come to stay. But be careful that you don’t move the house and wake them up!

Go on, give those ladybirds a treat!

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