

Toad Abodes

Objective:

Create a safe and shady abode for the toads living your backyard or garden. Toads are wonderful critters to have around your home. They eat tens of thousands of insects each year, helping to keep your garden and home free of some bothersome bugs! The Texas Toad (*Bufo speciosus*) is a welcome visitor to the Mission-Aransas Estuary and UT Marine Science Institute campus.

Materials:

- Clay/ceramic flower pot or clean plastic food container (e.g., large cottage cheese or yogurt)
- Scissors
- Golf ball to fist sized rocks, some flat and some round
- Non-toxic washable paints, waterproof markers, or paint pens (optional)



Instructions:

Making a house for your backyard and garden toads is very simple. The first step is to find a good spot to place the house. Toad abodes should be in shady locations, such as under a shrub or in the shade of your home. They also need access to water. If your yard or garden is watered regularly, or collects a lot of morning dew, your toad may find enough water on its own. A small dish of water

HOME LEARNING ACTIVITY

placed nearby a toad home is another way to provide them with the moisture they need.

To make your toad home you will turn the container or pot upside down or lay it on its side. This creates the shelter your toad needs while it is resting or hiding. Your toad home will also need an entrance, which can be created by cutting a



hole in the plastic container, placing the container or pot on its side (partially buried in the soil), or tilting the lip of the pot up with rocks. A broken flower pot can also make a great toad home. Turn or lay the pot so the toad has shelter and can enter and exit their home easily. For plastic container homes, you may need to put a large rock on top to ensure the toad



home doesn't blow or tip over.



Decorate your container before you secure it in the garden or yard. Be sure to use non-toxic materials and allow them to dry completely before securing the toad abode in place. Once established, it might take a little while for the local toads to find their new abode. Give it time, and resist the temptation to peek inside, you don't want to scare the toads away.

Additional Resources:

- Frogs and Toads of Texas. TPWD Texas Nature Trackers. https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/wildlife_diversity/texas_nature_trackers/amphibian_watch/amphibian_species/
- DIY Toad Abodes. Houston Arboretum & Nature Center. <https://houstonarboretum.org/2015/06/diy-toad-abode/>
- Make a Toad House. Welcome Wildlife. <https://www.welcomewildlife.com/make-a-toad-house/>