

# Waikato

# ENVIROSCHOOLS



## We all live in an Ecosystem!

### EXPLORING YOUR GARDEN OR BACKYARD

Discover your backyard or neighbourhood ecosystem. Investigating the different parts can help you understand how everything is interconnected, where each animal or plant depends on others to survive. Invertebrates, or bugs, are important parts of any ecosystem, and we can help create healthy habitats for them to live.



**Watch:** [The Big Picture - Department of Conservation video](#) covering the following big ideas:

- The interconnectedness of life
- Everything we do has an impact

## Bug Habitats

Investigating bugs, birds and trees can give you an idea of whether your garden or backyard has good habitat for our wildlife. **Habitats are the natural homes of plants and animals.** Are there lots of places in your garden for bugs, or not many?

**After exploring and finding bugs in your garden, what next?**

Here are some examples of how you can 'take action' on making your garden or backyard bug friendly:

- Research what different habitats bugs like to live in;
- Are there bug friendly plants you can put in the garden?
- Build a bug hotel or weta motel
- Watch: [Build a bug habitat](#)





## Wētā

We have a number of very special **endemic** (only found in this country) insect species in New Zealand - including Weta.

Wētā are large, spiny insects that are found in dark, damp places in gardens and bush throughout New Zealand. Be sure to check that gumboot before you put it on – a wētā may be hiding inside! Wētā are related to grasshoppers, locusts, crickets and katydids. Like these insects, they have powerful hind legs for jumping.

How many wētā species are there in New Zealand? You can find the answer to that question and many others here:

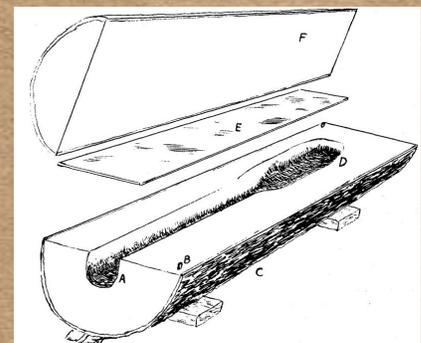
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/invertebrates/weta/>

### Build a wētā motel

Weta motels are nice dry hole where wetas can be safe from rats, birds, cats and hedgehogs. There are lots of great designs here and you can even earn a Toyota Kiwi Guardians medal if you make one!

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-go/toyota-kiwi-guardians/take-action/build-a-weta-motel/>

A very simple weta motel made from a piece of bamboo creating a nice safe hole for a weta.



Shelter used for tree wetas

- A. Entrance to shelter. 20 mm wide
- B. Cut off nail used to hold lid secure.
- C. Logs made from ngaio, Coprosma, elderberry and pine.
- D. Gallery widened to allow changing of position and mating.
- E. Perspex sheet fitted between lower half of gallery and lid.
- F. Lid

### Explore our different native habitats here:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/habitats/>

iNaturalist NZ is a free app that can be used on a smart phone or ipad. You take a photo to record what you see in nature, identify animals and plants with the help of a community of experts and learn about the natural world and your backyard ecosystem. <https://inaturalist.nz>