

Animal Track Trap

Set up a mud trap and see who comes into your garden over night

9 -12

Biodiversity & Interdependence



Background information:

Many people enjoy seeing wildlife in their grounds, or local area. Most of the time though we only see those that are active during the day, like birds on a feeder.

A simple soil/sand trap will allow you to capture the footprints of those unseen visitors and those that visit at night.

Equipment

- Soil or sand
- Trowel for spreading
- Tray (optional)

Activity

- Choose an area of your garden where you think animals may come in and out, such as a hole in a fence, near a bird feeder, or by a gate.
- Add water to your soil or sand. You are looking to get a consistency that will hold a shape, so try testing it by pressing your hands or fingers into it and see if an imprint remains.
- Spread your soil evenly over the ground and create a thick layer roughly 1-2cm deep. Smooth it down so you have a level flat surface. This is your 'trap'. (You may prefer to keep your soil in a tray, especially if you plan to place where people need access and will not like to get all muddy.)
- Leave the trap overnight and check in the morning for footprints.

Extension

Identify footprints using ID keys and charts

Try adding different foods to different areas of your trap and see where the footprints go.

Make a cast of any footprints using plaster of Paris



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