

Build a Toad House

Create a comfortable home for your happy, hopping friends.

Toads live in all parts of Iowa. They are found in a variety of locations including city parks, rural farms and residential backyards.

Benefits of Toads

Toads are wonderful friends to have in your yard.

- One toad can eat hundreds of insects or slugs every day and can help reduce the need for pesticides.
- They sing us to sleep at night and at times they can sound like a whole chorus.
- Toads easily absorb chemicals and pollutants through their skin so if you have a toad around it indicates a healthy yard.

Toad Habitat

It's important to understand how toads live so you can make a home that is attractive.

- **Moisture is important**, but unlike their frog cousins, toads do not live in water, they live on dry land. They do not like to have dry skin, so they hang out near water.
- They need a quiet spot to rest between adventures and meals so ensure their home is **away from heavily travelled pathways**.
- Toads **eat a variety of bugs and crawlers** including mosquitos, worms, slugs and snails. Placing their home under a nighttime light may attract bugs that they can eat.
- Toads prefer **cool shady spots**. In summer months, toads are nocturnal because it is hot outside and during the day they burrow into the ground or snooze in a toad house. In the cooler spring and fall they become more active during the day. In winter they burrow deep into the ground to hibernate since there isn't an abundant food source.
- **Avoid using pesticides** since their skin is very sensitive to these chemicals.

House Ideas

There are several ways to build a happy home for your friend.

- You can use **hot glue and found items** to create a mystical fairy garden style home. A more in-depth approach includes **tile adhesive for applying stones**, allowing it to dry for a few hours, then applying grout between each stone for a more durable look.
- You want the house to be **partially buried**. Toads enjoy sand, soil or organic matter and will happily lounge in any of those materials.
- The most important things to keep toads happy is **shade and access to clean water**. Place your toad house in an area of your yard that is prone to water collection or provide a shaded water dish which you check often for refilling.
- Remember they are wild animals who are much smaller than us, so be sure to check on the home from a good distance and **don't bother toads too often** or they may find a new home.



Lucinda Claire Macy

Simple or complex, your toad house design is limited only by your imagination.



TheSpruceCrafts.com

Keep your toad house in a shady, quiet spot.



BuncombeMasterGardener.org

Provide a water dish and keep it filled.



CraftingCheerfully.com

Partially bury the house to make things cozy.

Building a Toad House

Begin by finding a small or medium-sized clay pot. A cracked or broken pot works fine—unsightly parts can be buried. (But your toad friend really won't care how it looks.)

Gather Materials

Decide what you want to use to decorate. Options include rocks, gemstones, paints or found items in nature such as twigs, moss, river rock or chipped wood.

Collect bark off decaying trees or logs. (Avoid stripping bark off a living tree.) Thicker bark has inner fibers which can be pulled apart to make whimsical decorations.

Glue on Materials and Paint It

Use a hot or cool glue gun to glue on materials. Create roofing, siding, shingles, windows, an open door or whatever other creative thoughts you have. Remember, your toad house does not need to look like a house, it can take on whatever shape you'd like!

In this example we have glued on sticks for a roof line, painted vines and filled in the blank spots with moss. We even created a little window frame out of twigs.

Bury the House

Once your toad house is decorated to your liking, bury it at least a third of the way into the ground. Place it near a natural source of water or use a clay pot bottom filled with water. Make sure to check on the water often, as toads do not like to dry out.

