



Make a Roly Poly Home

Background Info – roly poly facts:

- Roly polies, also called pill bugs, sowbugs, and isopods, are not actually bugs or insects at all. In fact, they're in the crustacean subphylum, like crabs, lobsters, and shrimp.
- They are native to Europe, not the United States.
- They usually roll into a ball to escape predators, but they also do this to limit water loss in dry conditions.
- They can live up to 5 years!
- They are important ecosystem decomposers, meaning they eat decaying matter like dead leaves.

Materials:

- Butterfly home, or any other container that allows for circulation when closed (a plastic jar or tub with very small holes poked into the top will work)
- Roly poly food – dead leaves, decaying wood, dead lichens or mosses
- Dirt
- A large stone or two
- A mist bottle
- Roly polies!



GRASS RIVER NATURAL AREA

Activity:

1. Set up your roly poly home: put moist dirt down in your container, place some stones on top of the dirt, and add lots of dead leaves or other decaying plant matter. Make sure all of the contents are damp; mist them with water if they are dry.
2. Go on a search for some roly polies out in your yard. A good place to look is under rocks or logs in moist places.
3. Bring your roly polies inside and introduce them to their new home. Check the container every day to make sure it's still damp, and keep your roly polies away from bright artificial or natural light.
4. After a few days of observing these neat creatures, release them back into the wild at the spot at which you found them.

