

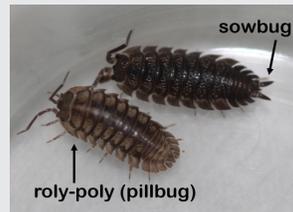
Sitting quietly in nature and observing the life and patterns going on around you can be a relaxing experience. Recording your feelings, thoughts and observations in a Nature Journal will help you reflect on the experience and can set the stage for future observations and reflections.

## Make an Isopod Igloo

If you don't have access to a rotten log, you can make an isopod igloo to attract roly-polies and sowbugs to your yard! Use these instructions to create a simple craft that will make it easier to find rotten log critters for closer observation.



Did you know — that roly-polies (*a.k.a. pillbugs or sowbugs*) are harmless, armored decomposers belonging to the group of animals called isopods?



Isopods are a type of crustacean related to crabs. Their gray oval bodies are easy to identify when looking under logs or through damp leaves. They breathe with gills and have seven pair of legs. While their names are often used

interchangeably, we commonly see two different types of isopods in the garden. When threatened, roly-polies will roll up into a ball resembling a pill (*hence pillbug*) whereas sowbugs cannot roll up into a ball and will usually attempt to flee. Also, sowbugs have a pair of tail-like appendages at the rear of their body and roly-polies do not.

### Materials:

Potato  
Knife  
Melon baller or metal spoon  
Toothpick and small piece of paper  
(optional)

### Instructions:

1. Cut your potato in half. You will need one half a potato per igloo.
2. Hollow out the inside of half the potato with the melon baller or spoon.
3. Carve a small door at the edge of the potato. If you like, add a toothpick with paper flag for decoration.
4. Place your igloo at the edge of the garden, and partially cover it with damp leaves.
5. Sprinkle the area gently with water. Leave it overnight.
6. Check in the morning to see if you have any new occupants.
7. If you are planning to take your isopods inside or to another area for closer study, place the potato in a container or the isopods may drop quickly to the ground. After you observe your isopods, be sure to release them safely back outside.

### Having fun?

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