



HCTF Education Habitats at Home

Learn how to create habitats that bring nature into your own backyard!



Make a.. Toad Home

Purpose

Our most common toad in BC is the Western Toad. They range through much of the province, but populations are declining in the southwestern region. One of the greatest impacts on Western Toad populations in BC is habitat destruction.

Toads are a welcome presence in the garden, eating lots of slugs, earwigs, cutworms, and other invertebrates. Like all amphibians, they are sensitive to pollution and do best in organic gardens or other pesticide-free environments. Toads generally come out at night and spend their days hiding in cool, dark places. Terracotta flower pots make great toad homes because they soak up moisture from the earth and stay cool during the day.

You will need

* **An Adult to help use tools safely***

1 Unglazed terracotta flower pot. Any pot large enough for two 9cm (3.5") wide openings will do.

1 Electric drill with 1/8" Glass & Tile drill bit. These bits are available at hardware stores and are the best for drilling through terracotta.

1 Terracotta pot saucer or a small stone, used to cover the drainage hole in the pot.

1 Metal file or sand paper, to smooth the cut edges.

1 Hammer

Safety glasses

Step 1

Soak the terracotta pot in a bucket of water for a couple hours (or overnight). This will make it easier to work with and less dusty when drilling.



Step 2

Draw an arch approximately 9cm (3.5") wide by 6cm (2.5") high on either side of the pot. It's important to have two openings so that a predator (such as a snake) can't trap the toad inside.



Step 3 - wear safety glasses!

With the help of an adult, drill a series of holes close together along the line you have drawn. The holes must be quite close together for the terracotta to break along the line.



Step 4 - wear safety glasses!

Use the hammer to gently tap the cutout until it detaches.



Step 5 - wear safety glasses!

Use a metal file or sand paper to round the cut edges. Be careful, they will be sharp!



Step 6

Place the Toad Home in a quiet shady spot, close to a water source. Cover the hole in the roof with a saucer or a small stone. Having moss and vegetation around will make a toad feel most at home!



Toads of British Columbia

Western Toad *Anaxyrus (Bufo) boreas*

Range: The Western Toad is found throughout most of British Columbia, the west central third of Alberta and just into the south east corner of the Yukon as well as much of the western United States.

Description: Up to 12cm in length. The dry, warty skin is usually green or brown, with black and reddish-brown warts. They have a light striped down their back and an oval “parotoid” (poison) gland on each cheek behind the eye.

Habitat: The Western Toad is usually found near ponds, streams, and other waterbodies as they lay their eggs in water. Western Toads often shelter in moist soil or rodent burrows.

Did you know? Adult Western Toads may migrate up to 7 km from their breeding ponds!



Great Basin Spadefoot *Spea intermontanus*

Range: In British Columbia, the Great Basin Spadefoot is restricted to the Okanagan and Thompson/Nicola valleys. It is more widely distributed through the Great Basin of the western United States, as far south as Arizona.

Description: Up to 5cm in length. They differ from most other frogs and toads by their vertical pupils. The skin is fairly smooth and grey-green in colour. It is scattered with small bumps which may be orange.

Habitat: Great Basin Spadefoots in BC are found in arid areas near vernal pools and alkali lakes, which serve as breeding sites.

Did you know? Spadefoots have sharp, spade-like knobs on the inner surface of their hind feet. These are used to help the toad burrow underground to avoid the heat of the day.



Other amphibians in BC

Boreal Chorus Frog

Pseudacris maculata



Bullfrog (exotic)

Lithobates catesbeianus



Columbia Spotted Frog

Rana luteiventris



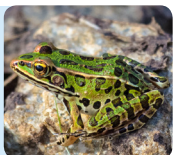
Green Frog (exotic)

Lithobates clamitans



Northern Leopard Frog

Lithobates pipiens



Northern Red-Legged Frog

Rana aurora



Oregon Spotted Frog

Rana pretiosa



Pacific Chorus Frog

Pseudacris regilla



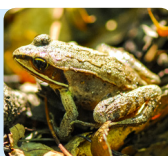
Tailed Frog

Ascaphus truei



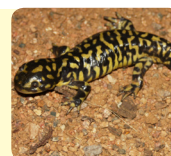
Wood Frog

Lithobates sylvaticus



Tiger Salamander

Ambystoma mavortium



Coeur d'Alene Salamander
Plethodon idahoensis



Long-Toed Salamander

Ambystoma macrodactylum



North-western Salamander
Ambystoma gracile



Pacific Giant Salamander

Dicamptodon tenebrosus



Roughskin Newt

Taricha granulosa



Be a citizen scientist and report your amphibian sightings to FrogWatch!
www.naturewatch.ca/frogwatch/