



Squirrel Box Challenge

Background

This challenge is based on the interaction between Pine Martens and Red Squirrels.

Remember in Earth Week we were learning about species in danger - did you find out another about the red squirrel?

The population of the Red Squirrel is unstable in Scotland due of loss of woodland and the introduction of the Grey Squirrel. The Pine Marten population has also grown in Scotland and the diet of a Pine Marten includes - small mammals, birds, insects, fungi berries and birds' eggs. One of the small mammals in the Pine Marten diet is the Red Squirrel.

When introducing, or encouraging, the expanse in population of one species it is vitally important to observe the impact of this change on other species, flora and fauna, in that area.

Your Challenge

Your task is to design a suitable Drey for a Red Squirrel that keeps the Pine Martens out.

Requirements

1. You should start by producing drawings and ideas before you start building.
2. Look around the house at what you could use to build the Drey - it could be from Lego or KNEX or bits and pieces from the re-cycle box - anything you like.
3. Size of the main Drey should be no larger than 30 cm (width) x 20 cm (length) x 20 cm (depth).
4. It should be at least 20 cm off the ground.
5. The structure needs to have a moving entrance.
6. Think about having obstacles to deter Pine Martens from taking a closer look.
7. Feel free to **ask an expert** if you have any questions
8. Use your imagination and be creative!

Supporting Information

The Pine Marten

The Pine Marten is chestnut brown in colour and have a pale yellow 'bib' on their neck is the size of a small domestic cat, with a long bushy tail. They are about 60 cm from nose to the tip of their tail. They are expert tree climbers and usually come out at night. Pine Martens prefer woodland and they live in holes in trees or squirrel dreys. They are playful and curious. Their diet includes small rodents, birds, insects, fungi, berries and birds' egg.



The Red Squirrel

The Red Squirrel has large eyes, small ears and long hind limbs adapted for leaping. They are about 20 cm long. Red Squirrels live in woodland in nests called dreys. Dreys are usually found near the main trunk of the tree, however, when Pine Martens are present they are found further out on the branches to make them more difficult for the Pine Marten to reach. Red Squirrels eat seeds, buds, bark and berries

