



# Ode to a Toad



Unlike a frog, she is not a swimmer  
Though she may want a refreshing  
soak with her dinner.  
As she sits in her hole  
And peers out like a mole  
Out flicks her tongue  
To catch flies, mosquitos, moths, slugs  
And other dastardly garden thugs.  
Then, in a most ladylike fashion,  
She wipes at her face and emits a trill  
or a peep  
Before hunkering down for a short  
day time sleep.

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## INTRODUCTION

Who doesn't like a toad all lumpy and bumpy with a chronic look of bemusement on its face? It makes you wonder what they are thinking!

But, did you know, aside from being a source of amusement, toads can benefit your garden (and your yard)?

Keep reading to learn more!

## A few facts about toads:

- Toads are amphibians, not reptiles
- Oxygen can pass through their skin
- They are bio-indicators
- When threatened, toads can give off a secretion that is irritating to mucus membranes
- They need water (be it a body of water or an area high in moisture - depending on the type of toad) to reproduce
- They readily absorb toxins through their skin

- The two toads found in Ohio are the Fowler's Toad and the Eastern American Toad
- Toads overwinter in the soil below the frost-line
- Adult toads are carnivores and can, according to the ODNR Amphibians of Ohio Field Guide, eat 10,000 "harmful insects" in a season.
- See toad cautions on page 3



Let's look at that last fact: they can eat 10,000 insects in a season. Or as another article indicated, up to 100 per day. Now I didn't do the math to see if these two bits of information add up, but in either case, that is a lot of insects! And that, my friends, is why you may want to set up a toad abode for your amphibian friends.



## Attracting Toads

Toads need areas of shelter with water, a food source, some shade, and no pesticide use. Native plants are some of the better plants to have for your toads as they attract many of the insects to which the toads are adapted. However, toads aren't all that picky about their snails, grubs, and caterpillars. Wood or brush piles are another good area to have as shelter. And, a water source is mandatory. Make sure the edges of the container are not too tall or they won't be able to get in or out. You could use rocks and branches as steps for your toads. And don't forget to keep it filled. Be careful with your mower and shovel. If you can have an area near your water and where they mainly live, try not to mow or dig or you could wreak havoc on your toad population.

## Attracting Toads: Building a Shelter

They can be as simple as an upside down broken clay pot as long as the break is big enough for them to enter and exit. Or, you could construct something out of wood or clay or a ceramic / clay pot that you have cut a door into or propped up on some stones. Add color. Be creative! As long as you have met the above criteria, the toads should show up.

***Check out the following links for examples:***

[Example 1](#)

[Example 2](#)

[Example 3](#)



## A WORD OF CAUTION

If you have gotten this far in this article, you are probably interested in toads and hopefully in attracting toads to your garden and yard. However, like all things, there are a few cautions to keep in mind.

- If your dog picks up a toad he could start salivating, gagging, and possibly vomiting due to the toad's glandular secretions. If this happens, according to the ASPCA, and your dog is conscious, carefully rinse his mouth (5-10 minutes) with a hose and his mouth facing downward (so the secretions go out and not in) and call your vet. **For those of us living in Ohio, "most toads in the United States are only mildly toxic"**.
- According to the same article, the truly life-threatening toads such as the Cane toad and the Colorado River toad, live in one or more of the following states: Arizona (southern), New Mexico, California, Florida, (southern) Texas, and Hawaii.
- Prevention in either case is best: keep an eye on your dog and don't leave water where dogs can get into it (the secretions could remain in the water if a toad relaxes in it).

Resources:

<https://pondinformer.com/toads-in-gardens/>

<https://www.asPCA.org/news/trouble-toads-getting-bottom-toxic-threat>