

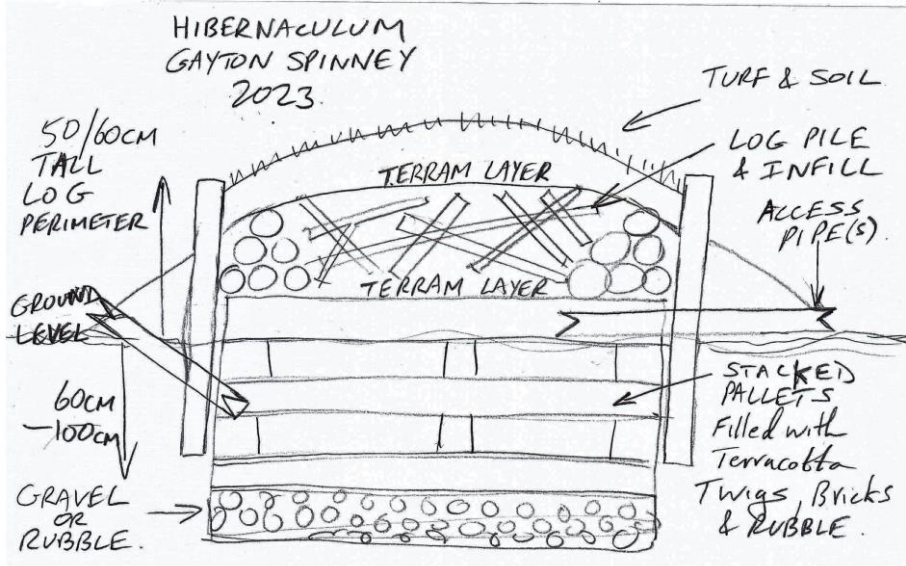
Spinney Hibernaculum



“What’s a Hibernaculum I hear you ask?”
.....it’s a sheltered refuge for reptiles and amphibians in which to hibernate over the winter.

The word ‘hibernaculum’ means “winter quarter” in Latin. Many of you may have seen my initial proposal during the “Big Help Out” Coronation celebration meetings to build (with the PC’s approval) a Hibernaculum in the Spinney. Also, you may have seen my updates on progress on Facebook, but equally, you may have wandered through the Spinney and thought “why has the spinney turned into a Builders Tip?”

Diagram:



Wildlife gardening is all the rage among gardeners today. Most of the attention goes to birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects. But an equally persuasive case can be made for protecting reptiles and amphibians.



Frogs, Newts and Toads largely hibernate on land. They usually find somewhere underground, or inside a structure. The important thing is that it's a place where they will be buffered against extreme cold; their heart and breathing rate slow right down and they don't feed.

Common Toads are becoming much less common! If their current decline continues, they could disappear by 2030.

Reptiles such as Lizards and Slow-worms also burrow underground to hibernate, and log piles and rotting wood underground are great for Stag Beetles.

Using a mini-digger, we dug a 60cm deep, double Pallet sized hole in the East edge of the Spinney, just within the treeline to provide a sheltered location with some sunlight, to prevent it drying out. On a layer of



gravel/rubble, several layers of pallets, bricks and slabs were placed up to ground level and partially filled with bricks, tiles, terracotta pots etc. to form voids within which creatures can hibernate. A number of pipes and tunnels allow them access



into the interior. A Log pile will be formed on top within a wooden palisade buried upright in the soil. Soil and turf will cover it all to form a substantial mound, 50-80cm high, topped with prickly

branches, providing shelter. Wildflowers to be sown/planted on top. Work in progress is suitably roped-off/guarded between phases.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Colin Simmonds, 01604 858933, Gone4aBeer@gmail.com