

## Creating a Toad-Friendly Yard:

Toads are indigenous to Fire Island. That means that they naturally occur here. A good reason to encourage toads to take up residence in your yard is that they feed on many things that we consider pests: mosquitoes, flies, beetles, slugs, moths, and assorted other insects. It's hard to beat a toad for natural pest control!

Because toads are nocturnal, they need a cool, dark space to rest during the day, to protect them from the sun and predators (this would include cats, so if you have an outdoor cat, you should probably not encourage toads to stay). You can create a toad-house by using a broken clay flowerpot, hollowed out log, or other small shelter. If you are using a flowerpot, it should blend with the garden so consider painting it brown, green, or other natural colors. Place it in a sheltered part of your garden, buried to the right size, with dead leaves in the inside. Consider placing a shallow source of water (like a pie tin) near the toad-house in a sheltered area among the plants, because toads like to sit in the water and soak it through their skin. If you really want to roll out the red carpet, put a night-light near the toad-house. That will attract bugs and create an easy food source for your toad.

A nice house, a pool, an outdoor buffet; what toad could resist such a warm welcome?? Try it and wait a few days to see if the debris has been moved at all. If so, your invitation has been successful!

A few cautionary notes: dry weather is not friendly to toads; they prefer moist environments. So if we are having a dry spell, don't be disappointed if your efforts don't pay off. Also, please don't use chemical pesticides. It could reduce the toad's food supply and be harmful to them. And as stated above, if you have an outdoor cat, please consider passing on this project.