

The Aims of the Society are:

To encourage and give advice to the public about the care of hedgehogs, particularly when injured, orphaned, treated cruelly or in any other danger.

To encourage the younger generation to value and respect our natural wildlife and, by supplying information to foster their interest in hedgehogs.

To fund research into the behavioural habits of hedgehogs (which involves no deliberate cruelty) and to ascertain the best method for their survival.

*For further information please send a s.a.e. to:-
The British Hedgehog Preservation Society,
Hedgehog House, Dhustone,
Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 3PL*

e-mail: info@britishhedgehogs.org.uk

website www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk

For urgent advice call 01584 890801



British Hedgehog Preservation Society

The Basic Facts and Much More



Part of the **Know your Hedgehog** series

PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH HEDGEHOG PRESERVATION SOCIETY,
HEDGEHOG HOUSE, DHUSTONE, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 3PL
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KNOW YOUR HEDGEHOG

THE BASIC FACTS and MUCH MORE

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PRESERVATION SOCIETY**
*HEDGEHOG HOUSE, DHUSTONE, LUDLOW,
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The Background Story

The Society was founded in April 1982 by Major Adrian Coles MBE of Knowbury, and followed his discovery of a hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) that was unable to escape from a cattle grid, into which it had accidentally fallen. Major Coles realised that without some form of escape the creature would die of starvation or dehydration and that many animals and birds must have already suffered death in this way. So, in his capacity as a local councillor, he was able to persuade Shropshire County Council to install escape ramps, similar to the one he had installed in his own cattle grid, in all the grids within its authority. The ensuing publicity aroused so much public interest that the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) was subsequently founded. Many County Councils now make it mandatory to include escape ramps in all their cattle grids and the British Standards Institute has included specifications for escape ramps in its British Standard 4008, after consultation with the Society.

We are sad to report that Major Coles passed away in 2017. We all miss him terribly but will continue to strive to help hedgehogs as he would have wanted. BHPS is a wonderful legacy to leave and we owe him a huge debt of gratitude for his foresight in founding the Charity and for his compassion for our prickly friends.

Since its inception BHPS has been at the forefront of bringing the humble hedgehog to public attention. It was an honour in its 10th commemorative year for the Society to be chosen as one of the four finalists for the Intervet/ British Veterinary Association annual award that was established to recognise an outstanding contribution in influencing public opinion, resulting in an improvement in the welfare of a group or species of animal.

In 2002 the BHPS celebrated its 20th anniversary with the publication of a book "Hedgehog Rehabilitation" this was revised and updated in 2010. (see inside back cover)

The work carried out by the Society

Firstly, as an advisory body we answer a great many letters, e-mails and telephone calls every day requesting help or advice on the care of hedgehogs. We have a list of hedgehog carers around the country so that when we receive

a phone call from someone with a sick, injured or orphaned hedgehog which the caller cannot personally look after, we are able to give them a name and phone number of a carer in their area who will hopefully be able to take the animal into care. Out of hours an answer phone message directs a caller to experienced hedgehog carers who are able to give first aid advice and a local contact number. The carers on the directory we keep are volunteers and are not representatives of BHPS.

We supply Education packs containing posters and leaflets on various aspects of hedgehogs to schools, libraries and Guide/Brownie/Rainbows/Scout/Cub/Beaver packs and also to WATCH and other wildlife and gardening clubs.

Project packs (for individual children) and a Fund Raising pack are also available as is a Carers pack for new "Hedgehog Carers" and a Vet pack for Vets or Veterinary Nurses.

Our list of speakers around the country is often being referred to as we receive numerous requests for someone to attend say a WI or local wildlife group or school, to talk about hedgehogs. A similar list is kept for people who attend local shows and events, again these kind volunteers do not represent BHPS.

We continually write to national and regional newspapers, radio stations and television contacts reminding the public to leave out food for hedgehogs; to take care when lighting bonfires as there may be a sleeping hedgehog inside; to leave out water in a drought; and pleading with motorists to take care on the roads especially when hedgehogs awaken from hibernation in the spring. Relevant Press Releases are also issued to over seven hundred media outlets.

Members, who number over 10,000, receive twice yearly newsletters and so we are constantly looking out for interesting, informative, unusual and amusing facts and anecdotes about hedgehogs. The continual updating of membership records and dealing with orders from our 'Hogalogue' (profits from which are used to carry out our aims) are ongoing activities. The Society is also very active on social media - please see @hedgehogsociety on Twitter and British Hedgehog Preservation Society on facebook.

Past projects funded by the BHPS include supplying every veterinary surgery in the country with our leaflets, including a technical one compiled especially for vets, as many of them have not encountered hedgehogs in a professional

capacity. This, at the time, was the first such technical reference work published in the UK – a second edition was issued in 2002 with updated and additional information. Garden centres have also been targeted with a poster highlighting the dangers of pesticides for wildlife, and containing other relevant hedgehog information. Concern for the environment and the creatures it supports can literally start in our own gardens.

The BHPS has always actively supported any attempt to have hedgehogs legally protected. These efforts were rewarded when MP Alan Meale's **Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill** was entered on the statute book as the **Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996**. The deliberate beating, drowning, kicking and other acts of cruelty to hedgehogs can be addressed in court and the perpetrators punished. A victory for all those who value the lives of our indigenous mammals.

The Society helps Carers on its directory by providing up to date information about hedgehog care and the legislation associated with their care – this is available by e-mail. We have also made sure every carer on our records has a heat pad to help with their care work, providing one free of charge if needed.

The Society has premises at Dhustone near Ludlow from where the charity operates. The trading arm of the BHPS also operates from these premises. The "Hogalogue" is issued each year from which items on the hedgehog theme are available for purchase.

In 2002 we faced our biggest challenge since our formation - that of trying to save the hedgehogs on Uist (one of the Western Isles of Scotland). Plans were being made to cull all the hedgehogs (circa 5000) on Uist because they were seen to be threatening the wader populations. The BHPS joined forces with other groups to form Uist Hedgehog Rescue who put forward alternative plans to save the hedgehogs from mass killing, by translocation to the mainland and release there. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) decided to go ahead with the cull but with generosity of members and public support we have been able to mount an ongoing rescue. The killing continued, as did the rescue, until Spring 2007 when SNH announced they would be handing the hedgehogs over to Uist Hedgehog Rescue for relocation to the mainland. While publicity for this has died down there is an ongoing relocation programme that is likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

In 2011, we joined forces with People's Trust for Endangered Species to create our joint 'Hedgehog Street' campaign. Hedgehog Street is a means of engaging British people with the wildlife that depends on them and their gardens. It's about empowering people with an understanding of hedgehogs, why they are declining, and how easy it is to help them. The partnership has worked so well that it is ongoing and has its own website, www.hedgehogstreet.org where people can sign up to be a 'Hedgehog Champion' as tens of thousands have already done.

Hedgehog Street is part of a wider campaign to help hedgehogs, run by the two charities, focusing on the conservation of the hedgehog, as the evidence for a decline has mounted. We run a steering group that meets every six months to decide on the direction of the work. We invest in a range of research projects that are looking at answering some of the knowledge gaps concerning hedgehogs and their ecology. We have set up and manage a series of professional training courses for land managers and consultants, delivered by mammal experts in different parts of the UK. We are also building links with developers to ensure hedgehogs are not forgotten in the rush to build houses.

In 2014 we took a Hedgehog Street garden to RHS Hampton Court Flower Show to demonstrate some of the horticultural principles behind our joint campaign. Designed by Tracy Foster to represent a series of adjoining back gardens, the Hedgehog Street garden showcased three quite different styles of garden, all interconnected and each of superb value to hedgehogs and other wildlife. The garden was intended to inspire people into the realisation that any style of gardening can be hedgehog-friendly. We were delighted to win a Gold Medal from the RHS as well as being chosen as 'The People's Favourite'.

This idea was replicated at the WI Centennial Fair in Harrogate in 2015, and in 2017 we were thrilled to be able to launch a new permanent garden at RHS Harlow Carr.

Patrons

BHPS is lucky enough to have eight high profile patrons who help us spread the word. Patrons are (alphabetically) Ann Widdecombe, Ben Fogle, Chris Beardshaw, CJ de Mooi, John Challis, Sir Ken Dodd OBE, Lorna Watson and Twiggy Lawson.

The Future

For both supporters and the general public we will continue to improve our information packs thus encouraging a greater understanding of hedgehogs and their needs. We also provide tips on how to make our local environment safer for them.

The Society is currently compiling a library of scientific papers about hedgehogs, providing both the general public and students/academics with access to these documents.

Following some successful seminars, we hope to organise more in the future as well as smaller 'get togethers' for carers.

Should sufficient finances become available, a shop with an education centre is also planned.

HELPING HEDGEHOGS

Nearly a quarter of the hedgehogs born into the world die before leaving their nest; probably a half of the rest do not survive their first hibernation. We can all assist hedgehogs that have survived these early adversities in several ways:-

1. Providing as safe an environment as possible in our gardens and allotments. Whenever possible a small corner should be left as a wildlife sanctuary, the rewards of which could include the pleasure of seeing visiting hedgehogs, as well as the knowledge that they will be helping in clearing the ground of pests.
2. Accumulating materials i.e. garden rubbish, leaves, brushwood, etc., suitable for hedgehog nests (hibernacula), and supplementing their natural diet of slugs, snails, beetles, worms, caterpillars and suchlike with some protein (e.g. tinned meat-based pet food, specialised hedgehog food or crunchy cat biscuits), particularly in periods of unseasonable weather. A bowl of drinking water should also be available.

3. Seeking advice (see back cover) and taking action when you see a hedgehog or hoglet in trouble.

4. Assisting them to avoid man-made hazards and eliminating or reducing such dangers whenever possible.

ON THE ROADS

Most of us see more squashed hedgehogs than live ones. Their natural defence mechanism - rolling into a ball - is no protection against road traffic. All nature-loving people want to do something about this carnage. So, do drive carefully, especially at night, do all you can to avoid hedgehogs which may be crossing the road and, if it is safe to do so, stop and assist hedgehogs to get across quickly. And don't forget also to ask your friends to be kind to hedgehogs on our roads. Don't be tempted to take them 'somewhere safer'. They travel over a mile a night and will have to face hazards wherever they go. They also might have dependent young they need to return to and they will know the area, local food sources, water sources and nests.

If you do see one dead at the side of the road, and it is safe to do so, check to see if there are any hoglets nearby, if you can, do this over the next week in case any return looking for their mother. This would apply to any dead hedgehog seen during the breeding season (June to September). The distress call of a hoglet is a high pitched squeak a bit like a bird but at ground level.

MAKE YOUR MOTTO - SLOW DOWN FOR WILDLIFE

IN GARDENS

Many pesticides are potentially dangerous to hedgehogs and slug pellets are no exception. Hedgehogs may eat the pellets, and they are very likely to eat the poisoned slugs and snails. Any form of pest control can affect the hedgehogs' food chain. So we advise you to use garden chemicals sparingly and, if you must use slug pellets, put them inside pieces of pipe or under stone slabs where hedgehogs can't get at them. We believe, however, that a "beer-trap" (i.e. a pot of stale beer sunk in the ground) is an equally effective way of killing slugs. In any case, as an extra precaution, all dead slugs should be removed regularly.

Garden rubbish frequently provides a home for hedgehogs and should be carefully turned over before burning. It is safer to make your bonfire on the day it is to be lit or to use a garden incinerator specially designed for burning rubbish. The larger heaps that accumulate for 5th November should of course always be checked prior to the Bonfire Night festivities, better still move it to its final burning position on the day.

Grass, especially if a little longer than usual, is another possible home for hedgehog families and care is needed before mowing and strimming. Cut the grass to a foot long and then check again for hedgehogs and other wildlife. Never burn pampas grass without first checking there are no hedgehogs using it as a nesting place.

Hedgehogs can swim and are sometimes attracted to garden ponds and swimming pools but they may drown if they cannot get out. So gardeners should ensure that there are slipways around the edge of the water to enable the hedgehogs to escape - half submerged rocks or even a piece of chicken wire to be used like a scrambling net are suggested. Pond levels should be kept topped up.

Netting of all kinds - that used for covering plants and fruit, as well as football nets, tennis nets, fishing nets and suchlike can be a major hazard as hedgehogs easily become entangled in them. Their inquisitiveness can also get them into trouble if their heads get stuck in various kinds of containers - empty food cans, yoghurt pots, plastic cups etc.

Perhaps even more deadly are the plastic rings that hold 4 and 6 packs of cans together because hedgehogs can get their heads trapped in them. Always make sure each circle is cut. What better reasons could there be for always picking up our litter?

Some of these topics and other dangers are covered in more detail later in this booklet – see Garden Dangers on page 22.

It is always wise to get a hedgehog checked by a rescue centre as soon as possible. Even if you think it is doing well under your care, it could be struggling more than you know and need urgent drug help. For this reason it is best to get it to rescue rather than having a go yourself, they will know the warning signs to look out for and have vet back up if needed.

AROUND and ABOUT

Hedgehogs are sometimes subjected to deliberate cruelty by heartless or thoughtless people. This is illegal. Should you see this occurring contact the Police or RSPCA. If the unfortunate hedgehog is injured, try to get it to a Veterinary Surgeon, or local carer. In any case, please let the British Hedgehog Preservation Society know about it.

IN FARMING AREAS

Hedgehogs and many other small animals, as well as birds, frequently cannot escape from the sheer-sided pits beneath cattle and sheep grids. This results in a long drawn-out death by dehydration and/or starvation. A simple ramp in the grid solves this problem.

The escape ramp for hedgehogs and other small animals is nothing elaborate. It is simply a slope of about 20° in one corner of the pit (preferably an “outer” corner, ie a corner to which the cattle/sheep do not have access). It can be made of concrete, say 200mm (8 inches) wide, or of wood or metal. The surface should be allowed to remain rough to enable the escapee to gain a foothold. If it is impossible for an animal to gain access to the whole of the pit, i.e. if it is sectionalised, more than one “ramp” would be required. Similarly in a very large cattle/sheep grid, two ramps would be preferable.

British Standard 4008:2006 for Local Authorities contains useful information on cattle grids.



Please publicise the installation of these escape ramps, as this will assist the acceptance of such schemes nationwide. Their cost, of course, is negligible.

Keep Barbed wire off the ground so that hedgehogs cannot become entangled in it.

FIRST AID

If a hedgehog is found in daylight, this is usually a sign that something is wrong. Hedgehogs are nocturnal and do not come out during the day to lie in the sun. Nest disturbance is common but many are more likely to be orphaned, injured, poisoned or cold and starving so your help is essential. Staggering and poor muscle co-ordination may mean an internal injury but it could also mean hypothermia. If this is the case, the animal will be so cold that he/she will be unable to eat or drink or curl up and is therefore on a downward spiral so warmth is vital. Even if there are no obvious signs of injury the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Ensure the hedgehog is kept warm, vital for an animal in shock, by placing it in a high sided box lined well with newspaper, with a hot water bottle filled with hand hot water and wrapped in a towel. Place the hedgehog on the water bottle and cover with another towel. Leave enough room for the hedgehog to move off if it gets too hot. A heat pad for pets is ideal but not always available. However direct heat is not advisable if internal bleeding is suspected or external bleeding is obvious.
2. Check for fly eggs (tiny cream clusters) or already developed maggots in the eyes, ears, mouth, anus, armpits and fur. If present try to remove them all very carefully. Never use cat or dog flea spray on hedgehogs – a powder suitable for caged birds (from pet shops) is better if fleas are present.
3. Bathe open wounds with warm water and seek help as soon as possible.
4. If there is a problem with the eyes, bathe them in warm water or Optrex and again seek advice.

5. Offer the hedgehog a drink of water – never cow's milk as this can cause enteritis.

6. Cover the hedgehog with a towel or similar to keep warm and put it into the box and cover the box with an old net curtain to protect the patient from flies, dirt, etc. Put the box in a dark quiet place to aid recovery and reduce stress. Offer a small amount of meat based pet food or a little cooked chicken and some water for it to drink. Then contact a hedgehog carer or vet (BHPS maintains a directory of carers).

CREATING A WILDLIFE GARDEN

The creation of a wildlife garden, or a wildlife area in your garden, will attract a diversity of wild creatures and go some way toward redressing the balance of human interference with nature, which has destroyed so many habitats in the countryside. Also, by helping hedgehogs, birds, bats, frogs and toads to survive the winter and providing places for them to raise their young, you will be rewarded by their helping to keep garden pests under control.

Your wildlife garden could include several (or all) of the following features:

WOOD PILE: Hedgehogs might build a nest underneath and, if left undisturbed for some time, algae and mosses will cover it, attracting insects. They will, in turn, be fed on by larger garden creatures. The dark interior may also encourage slow worms (another predator of the slug) to seek shelter.

COMPOST HEAP: Birds will feed off the mini-beasts that congregate in a compost heap, as will hedgehogs and toads that may nest in it. A word of warning though before using the compost: test the base and sides gently for sleeping wildlife.

HEDGES INSTEAD OF FENCES: Flowering hedges provide flowers and fruits for wildlife, nesting places for birds and cover for hedgehogs, voles and shrews. They are also much more attractive than fences.

Recommended hedging species: beech, holly (evergreen winter shelter for roosting birds), buckthorn, dog rose, hazel, goat willow, hawthorn, and berberis. If you do have solid fences or walls, please try to create 'Hedgehog Highways' in the bottom - 13cm x 13cm (5" x 5") gaps for hedgehogs to use to access your garden. Hedgehogs travel around a mile a night and that's a lot of gardens! The gardens all need to join up if hedgehogs are to use them so encourage your neighbours to do the same.

WILDFLOWERS & SUITABLE PLANTS: Flowers provide nectar and pollen to feed insects such as butterflies, hoverflies and bees. Plant wildflowers from seed (it is illegal to remove them from the wild). Wildflower seed packs will probably include: bird's foot trefoil, vetch, hawkweed, wild white clover, bluebell, broom, wild cornflower, hound's tongue, common knapweed, lady's smock and wild marjoram. Recommended garden plants: buddleia (attracts butterflies), scabious, ice plant, michaelmas daisy, phlox, sweet william, marigolds, sunflowers, ornamental grasses, wild irises, pyracantha, snowberry, hostas and cotoneaster.

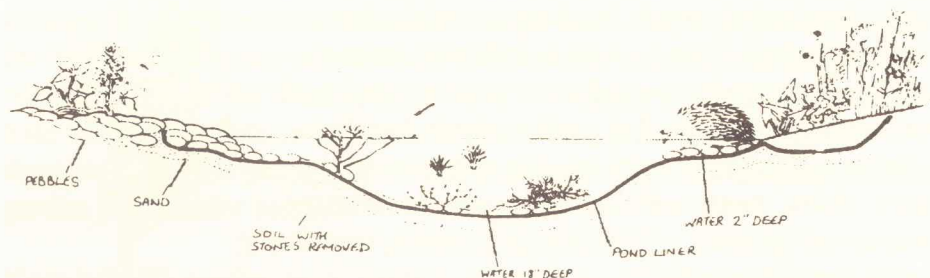


WILD CORNER: Allow nettles and weeds to take over a corner of your garden. They will provide privacy for small creatures and food for caterpillars.

ROCKERY: Toads, newts and female frogs usually spend winter on land, under rockery stones (or in a log pile). Recommended rockery plants: aubretia, hardy geraniums, ivies, sedums, sempervivum and wild thyme.

MINI-POND/BOG GARDEN: An area of water attracts a multitude of creatures including: frogs, toads, newts, diving beetles, water scorpions and thirsty hedgehogs. Choose an area away from trees (especially sycamore). One side of the pond should gradually slope to allow hedgehogs and other creatures an exit. Butyl rubber pond liners are recommended. Around at least one third of the pond perimeter

should include a shelf that is only 5-6cms below the normal water level. Put stone-free soil on top of the shelf and introduce some native water plants. Recommended water plants: water milfoil, water starwort, miniature water lily, water soldiers (floating plant). If you don't want a pond, perhaps because of small children, an area of BOG GARDEN will provide an interesting drinking point for wildlife. Line a shallow depression in your chosen site with pond liner; fill two thirds with soil to hold water. Your bog garden could support: meadowsweet, loosestrifes, marsh marigold, ragged robin, cuckoo flower, cotton grass, bog pimpernel, creeping jenny and reeds.



HEDGEHOG, BIRD & BAT BOXES: Providing nesting boxes for hedgehogs, birds and bats might encourage these creatures to reside in your garden, though tenancy cannot be guaranteed! Place bird and bat boxes in trees with cover, but if you have no trees fix them on walls or fences, preferably in the cover of foliage from a climbing plant, and well away from the reach of cats and other predators. Hedgehog boxes should be sited in a quiet spot hidden by ground covering plants, low shrubs or tree branches. To purchase ready made boxes contact the relevant organisation: Bat Conservation Trust, 5th Floor, Quadrant House, 250 Kennington Lane, London, SE11 5RD; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, SG19 2DL; Instruction sheets for



making your own boxes can also be acquired from these organisations (an sae would be appreciated). Instructions for making a hedgehog home can be found in this booklet or on our website at www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk

BIRD BATH AND TABLE: A bird bath provides birds with somewhere to drink and bathe (feather cleaning is essential) and a bird table holding a variety of foods will attract various feathered friends. Peanuts in dispensers are favoured by Blue Tits, Coal Tits and Great Tits, but Greenfinches, Nuthatches, Siskins and even Woodpeckers might be seen pecking at the nuts. Seeds and specially purchased bird food sprinkled on the table will attract Finches, Robins, Sparrows and Starlings. Half a fresh coconut provides much needed energy for small birds, once the shell is empty it can be used to hold a bird cake mix (recipe available from RSPB).

DO NOT USE pesticides or slug pellets in your wildlife garden or you will kill off species that are links in the food chain. Also, you run the risk of killing those creatures you do not wish to harm, as pesticides tend to be indiscriminate and they, and some slug pellets, could kill hedgehogs. If you are overrun with slugs and your resident hedgehog(s) do not seem to be keeping the numbers down you could try beer traps (pots of beer placed sunk in the ground) or the skin of half a grapefruit placed on the ground like a dome. You can also protect precious plants with a ring of sharp sand, crushed eggshells or copper bands or tape around the base of plants or pots. We have had people reporting success using wool pellets and nematodes too.

Now, sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labour! Spend time in your wildlife garden just looking and get to know the many and varied creatures that share it with you.

Further recommended reading: The Natural Gardening Book by Peter Harper (Gaia Books Ltd), Creating a Wildlife Garden by Bob & Liz Gibbons (Hamlyn) and The National Trust Book of Wild Flower Gardening by John Stevens (Dorling Kindersley).

You may also like to look at the website of Garden Organic at www.gardenorganic.org.uk

HEDGEHOGS IN ENCLOSED GARDENS

You should only consider keeping hedgehogs in enclosed gardens if they cannot cope in the wild because of an injury (e.g. amputated front leg). Fully functioning hedgehogs can travel up to two miles a night in their foraging and would not settle in a confined environment. If you have an enclosed garden and wish to offer it as a safe release site for a recuperated hedgehog that cannot be returned to the wild, contact your local animal sanctuary or hedgehog carer (the BHPS should be able to give you an appropriate name and contact phone number).

Thankfully hedgehogs in need of a secure enclosed environment aren't that common because the aim is always to get them back in the wild where they belong. If you are lucky enough to acquire a hedgehog in need of a safe environment, either long term or short term, the following will help you to look after him/her.

HOUSING A HEDGEHOG

The hedgehog will need a ready made house – fill it with dry pet straw or better still, dry leaves. If the hedgehog has fleas and has not already been treated, use a flea **powder** that contains Pyrethrum and is suitable for caged birds, to deter fleas and ticks. A light dusting on the back half of the hedgehog (avoiding face) should do the trick. Flea treatments for cats or dogs are too strong for hedgehogs. See the hedgehog homes section in this booklet or for further ideas on making a suitable house see BHPS leaflet '**HEDGEHOG HOMES**' or the BHPS Hogalogue or online shop for ready made home.

YOUR GARDEN should be 'Hedgehog friendly', i.e. no pesticides or slug pellets used, escape ramps of chicken wire or rocks placed in ponds and no netting to trap delicate legs. Ensure that swimming pool covers are well attached in winter and that the pool is checked EVERY DAY in summer. Polystyrene floats left on the top of the pool can sometimes help to save a life.

NB: NEVER SPRAY HEDGEHOGS FOR FLEAS. NEVER USE ANY ORGANO PHOSPHATES IN GARDEN AS THESE ARE LETHAL TO HEDGEHOGS.

Captive hedgehogs must be fed every night, even when you are on holiday. they will eat garden pests but will also need a supplementary feed. The food should be given at dusk - after all flies have gone, and any leftover food removed early in the morning before flies arrive.

FEEDING A HEDGEHOG

DIET:

- 1) Hedgehog food
- 2) Meaty cat or dog food
- 3) Cat biscuits

FRESH WATER MUST ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE in several different places in the garden.

The dish of food should be placed under an up turned plastic box with a 13cm (5") square entrance. A weight on top and an obstacle such as a large stone 13cm (5") in front of the entrance will deter other animals (e.g. cats) from eating it.

During hibernation cat biscuits should always be left in the feeding box. When these are eaten give fresh food for 1-2 days and then return to biscuits when fresh food is not taken again. Hibernation is not continuous and hedgehogs do sometimes wake up - this uses up energy which will need to be replaced, so they look for food and water.

Caring for the health of the hedgehog

If you have any concerns about the health or well-being of any hedgehog, please ensure it is taken to a vet or an experienced hedgehog carer as a matter of urgency. Your vet will find a copy of our booklet on treating sick and injured hedgehogs useful - we can provide these free of charge - please request one for your vet if you are considering releasing a hedgehog into your enclosed area.

· **Do not allow them to get too fat.** The maximum weight for a female hedgehog is **1.361kg (3lb)** and **1.588kg (3½lb)** for a male. The optimum weight for hibernation is **600g - 1kg (1⅓-2¼ lb)**. Try to ensure that the hedgehog is within this range. If your hedgehog appears poorly check ears for septic infection and / or maggot infestation. Go to the vet at once. S/he will remove maggots and eggs and treat infection.

· **Eyes** - sometimes white, fatty tissue appears from under eyelids when hedgehog opens eyes wide. This is fat deposit and will go if hedgehog dieted for 1-2 weeks, i.e. Cut food by up to ½ for 1-2 weeks. These fat deposits can obscure vision so must be got rid of by dieting.

· **Baldness** is usually ringworm. See vet or hedgehog carer.

· **Worming** - Hedgehogs will pick up worms from slugs and snails so they may need to be wormed. Contact BHPS for latest worming treatments if they are not thriving.

· **FOR VET:** to examine a hedgehog - Anaesthetise with Halothane Gas. Ketamine can give hallucinations and the hedgehog will be unhandleable for 7-10 days.

· **Pneumonia** - See vet or hedgehog carer.

· **Wounds** - See vet or hedgehog carer.

· **Traces of blood in faeces** - is likely to be coccidiosis. See vet or hedgehog carer.

· **Bone infections** - (e.g. torn out claws) - See vet or hedgehog carer.

Miscellaneous

Fleas - can be controlled by sprinkling hog on back with an organic **powder** containing pyrethrum suitable for caged birds. Hedgehogs do not

need their fleas. Hedgehogs fleas will live on no other animal. **NEVER SPRAY HEDGEHOGS WITH DOG OR CAT FLEA SPRAYS AS THEY MAY BE TOXIC TO THE HEDGEHOG.**

BHPS booklet about treating hedgehogs may be useful, in case the hedgehog should become poorly, it gives basic advice, treatments and dosages for a hedgehog.

Remember - Hedgehogs are nocturnal, they are active at dusk and through the night. They are not pets, but can become quite unafraid.

Lifespan - In the wild with no human help their lifespan is much shorter than when kept in enclosed garden and cared for. The longest living known hedgehog to date was fourteen years old when he died and was very much missed by the people who cared for him.

HEDGEHOG HOMES

IN THE WILD

Efficient winter nests are essential if hedgehogs are to survive hibernation. Thus, in autumn, they begin to collect leaves, grass, straw, bracken, reeds etc and use these materials for building their own nests under hedgerows, fallen logs or piles of brushwood. These "hibernacula" prove to be surprisingly waterproof and good insulation against the cold.

IN THE NATURAL GARDEN

Most gardens have a supply of the materials mentioned above and suitable sites for nests - under sheds, compost heaps, shrubs and piles of leaves or behind stacks of logs and under spare building materials. In these circumstances, if hedgehogs want to spend a winter here, they should be able to get on and build their own shelters. However, you may wish to provide your 'resident' hedgehog with (or encourage any in the vicinity to become 'resident' in your garden by the provision of) a more permanent structure.

IN THE MORE FORMAL GARDENS AND IN OTHER ENCLOSED AREAS WHERE HEDGEHOGS ARE BEING CARED FOR (E.G. AFTER AN INJURY OR WHEN ORPHANED) THEY WILL PROBABLY NEED NESTS MADE FOR THEM.

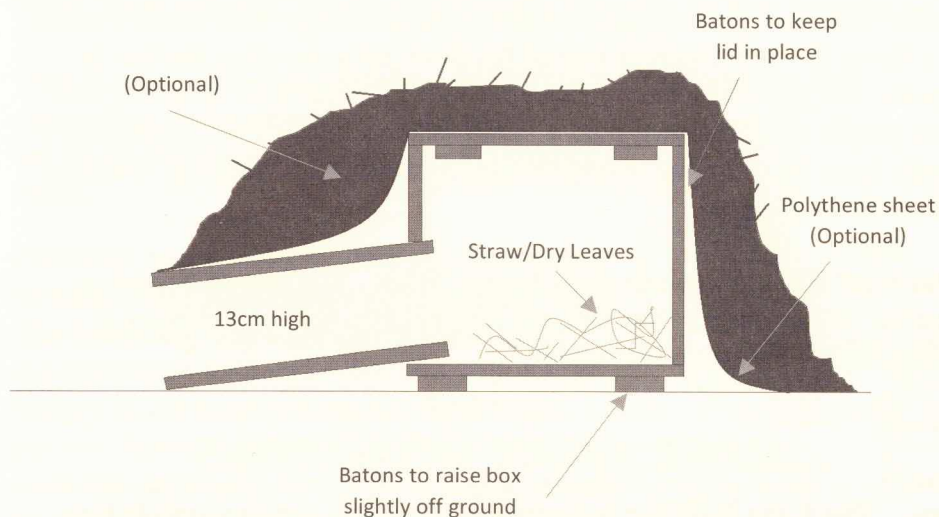
HEDGEHOG HOUSE

This design is one that the Society recommends and is a permanent type of home. Any available timber can be used (old or new) but the better it is made, the longer it will last (the wood can be tanalised or treated on the outside only with a water based preservative but not creosoted). Do not nail down the roof, as you may need to clean the box in the future. The entrance tunnel could be constructed with old bricks placed on top of each other with a piece of slate with a brick on top for the roof. Make sure the entrance is kept clear and avoid the temptation to disturb the hedgehogs. The finished home can be covered with plastic sheeting, soil and twigs placed on top or left as it is. Straw and dry leaves left outside may be taken in and used for bedding by any prospective resident. Remember that hedgehogs have soft feet and so cover the floor of your Hedgehog House with a layer of earth topped with dry leaves or pet straw.

HELPFUL HINTS

When you have made a hedgehog house, place it in a quiet part of your garden, preferably against a bank, wall or fence and hope that you will have a visit from a friend seeking a home. Make sure the entrance to the house does not face North or North East, thus avoiding the cold winter winds. It may then become the winter home for some lucky hedgehog. If female, she may even have her young in it in the spring. After winter use (late March/early April) it may be cleaned out and, to some extent, washed out. To make sure there is nobody in residence, put a small, light obstruction in the entrance to see whether it is pushed away overnight; if it isn't, this is an indication that the hedgehog may no longer be in residence (but take care just in case). You can clean the house using an organic Pyrethrum powder.

On no account should the hedgehog house be creosoted or "treated" as the fumes remain for a long time and can be very harmful.



The wood we have used is 2cm thick, if the wood you use is a different thickness, you will need to adjust the measurements to suit.

N.B. Do not creosote or treat wood with non-water based preservatives

There are many other designs which can be used e.g. - some breeze blocks with a paving slab on top; or a plastic swing bin on its side; or an upside down pet basket; or an upside down toy box with the hand holds cut away. Any entrance hole should be approx 130mm x 130mm (5" x 5").

There are various "ready-made" hedgehog homes on the market, including the one that can be obtained from our Hogalogue.

HEDGEHOG FEEDING STATIONS

The idea is to provide something that is high enough for the hedgehog and its food to go under, but too low for a cat to access.

Try a paving slab on bricks (leave a gap between 2 of the bricks as an entrance hole); or a box with a small hole cut into it; or a large box upside down with a brick propping up one end; or a rabbit hutch with its door wedged partly open; or an upside down pet basket; or an upside down toy box with the hand holds cut away. If you have a shed or summer house that is raised off the ground slightly the food can be put under this. As a final suggestion get a plastic storage box. Cut a 130mm x 130mm (5" x 5") hole in one of the short sides so when the box is upside down the hole becomes an entrance. Put the food at the far end and weight the box down with a stone. Place another brick 130mm (5") away from the entrance to stop cats lying down and 'hooking' the food out with their paws.

Don't put feeding stations close to nest boxes. If a female hedgehog has her nursery in the nest box she will not like the extra visitors it encourages so close to her babies.

MORE ABOUT HEDGEHOGS



The Latin word for hedgehog is Erinaceus and our own British hedgehog is scientifically known as Erinaceus europaeus; it is the same species that occurs throughout most of the continent

of Europe. In Britain it is found almost everywhere except some of the Scottish Islands, but tends to be scarce or absent from wet areas and pine forests. Uplands and mountainsides are not popular, probably because they lack both suitable food and suitable nesting places. Hedgehogs are well established in our urban habitat and can, somewhat surprisingly, survive very well in our cities, making extremely good use of cemeteries, railway land, wasteland and both public and private gardens. Shakespeare mentions hedgehogs in 'The Tempest' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream' and he refers to 'hedgipigs' and 'urchins'.

Description



Everyone is sure to know what a hedgehog looks like. The hedgehog's back and sides are covered in 25mm (1") long spines (which are really modified hairs). The face, throat, chest, belly, and legs have coarse, grey-brown fur. There are approximately 5,000/7,000 spines on an average adult hedgehog. What many people do not know is that a hedgehog has a small tail.

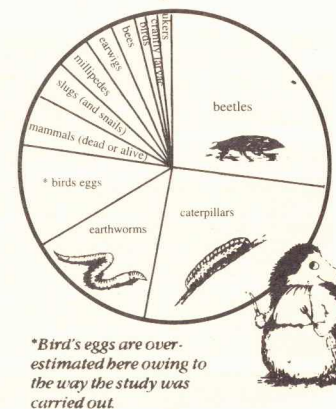
Diet



Hedgehogs are noisy eaters as people who have encountered these animals 'at table' will testify; but what do they actually eat?

This diagram shows that beetles are a major food item along with caterpillars and earthworms. Most people are aware that hedgehogs are basically insect eaters.

However, many householders put out a saucer of meat based pet food for their garden friends. The hedgehog will treat this as a welcome supplement to its normal diet and will not go hungry if, for some reason, the food is not put out. Always ensure that a dish of water is available especially during the summer months or in extreme weather conditions.



A recommended diet is listed under 'Caring for Autumn Juveniles' (page 24).

Garden Visitors

At the risk of disappointing some people it is worth mentioning the fact that hedgehogs tend to 'do the rounds' and visit several gardens within an area. Ten or more different individuals may visit a garden over several nights, which could mean that 'your hedgehog' is in fact a number of different individuals visiting at different times.

GARDEN DANGERS

Helping your Friends



The best ways of assisting hedgehogs are by helping them avoid man-made hazards and providing them with suitable places to nest, especially in the winter. Some of these dangers are mentioned earlier but it is worth covering them again.

Slug Pellets - most are poisonous and should only be used where there is a serious slug problem; always read the directions for use to ensure that you are not using more than necessary. Pellets should be placed in a pipe or under a slate inaccessible to hedgehogs. Remove dead slugs daily. Use other pesticides sparingly; you never know what else they might kill or make sick. Always try alternative methods – see the earlier section on Creating a Wildlife Garden.

Garden Ponds/Swimming Pools - can be death traps to small mammals so always ensure there are several gently sloping slipways to allow them to escape if they fall in. Ensure the pool cover is on every night and that polystyrene floats are placed near the side for the hedgehog to cling to. Slipways may be made by half submerging bricks or rocks around the edges of ponds and pools. Alternatively a piece of chicken wire or green plastic coated wire netting can be hung over the edge like a scrambling net which hedgehogs can climb up to freedom – but keep the pond level topped up so they can reach the wire. Do remember hoglets will need a longer ramp than an adult hedgehog.

Other Dangers - Hedgehogs can become entangled in **tennis and other nets** causing death by starvation. Roll up nets well above ground when

not in use. Keep pea netting 22-30cm (9-12 inches) off the ground so hedgehogs can pass safely underneath them and plants will grow up to the netting. Legs can be caught in the gaps between logs in rolls.

When tidying the garden take care when moving piles of leaves and other garden rubbish as these are ideal places for a hedgehog to make its nest.

Hedgehogs are inquisitive and will try to eat almost anything, a trait that can lead to their undoing. Having been attracted by the left overs, hedgehogs have been found with their heads stuck in **tins, yoghurt pots and plastic cups**. Always cut the **plastic rings** of "carry 4 & 6 pack" holders. To prevent such unnecessary deaths, litter should be disposed of in a proper manner. Keep bags used for putting out household rubbish off the ground. This will prevent hedgehogs from reaching them and tearing into the bag. They can become trapped in the rubbish or even put out for the refuse collection.



Keep **drains** covered so that hedgehogs do not become stuck down them. Bean trenches, footings, fencing holes and car inspection pits are all potential death traps for hedgehogs. Provide an escape route, e.g. sloping plank or cover the holes so hedgehogs do not become trapped.

Keep shed, greenhouse and garage doors closed at night so hedgehogs are not tempted to make a nest in them, and perhaps become trapped when doors are permanently closed. Store chemicals safely.

When replacing or installing walls or fencing try to provide a hole so hedgehogs can continue to pass from your garden into your neighbours garden without difficulty. Only use environmentally safe wood preservatives on your fences, garden furniture and wooden buildings.

Do keep dogs under control if you know you have hedgehogs in the garden. Also remember that whilst your dog may be hedgehog friendly visitors' dogs may not. If in doubt keep your dog on a lead when it goes out into the garden when it is dark.

Hedgehogs in the Garden



The hedgehog is known as 'the gardener's friend' as it will eat slugs, beetles, caterpillars etc., and does no harm, so if you have a garden a hedgehog is to be encouraged. They should **not** be kept in close captivity, but regarded as welcome visitors.

Parasites



If it is necessary to remove fleas from a hedgehog, then a commercially prepared powder suitable for caged birds can be lightly dusted amongst the spines (taking care to avoid the eyes of the animal) as an adequate treatment, but do **not** use on very young hedgehogs.

Blood-sucking ticks are often found on hedgehogs and after taking their fill of blood, will drop off the host in order to complete their life cycle. Removing these ticks with forceps or by any other means is to be avoided as the inexperienced may leave the mouthparts and head in the skin that may turn septic or agitate the tick which could then regurgitate infected blood back into the hedgehog.

CARING FOR AUTUMN JUVENILES

WHAT IS AN AUTUMN JUVENILE?



Autumn juvenile hedgehogs are ones that are old enough to be away from their mothers but too small to hibernate. The autumn juvenile season can start as early as September and is busiest through until the end of November. However some will struggle on and the occasional one can be found from December through until April. (The season will vary slightly depending whether you live in the south or north and depending on the weather.) The ones found in March and April may have struggled through the winter or they may have hibernated but at the minimum weight for hibernation so they are weak once they emerge.

Young hedgehogs can and will hibernate at 450gms (1lb) or less but are less likely to survive. It is preferable for them to weigh 600gms

(1lb 6oz) in order to hibernate successfully and be in sufficiently good condition to survive post hibernation.

Giving advice on whether to leave them out in the garden and keep feeding them or whether to bring them indoors and over-winter them can be difficult. Left outside it is more difficult to monitor them and if they start to have problems and hide away they can just die. If they are brought indoors the stress of captivity can also kill them. So the following advice will be correct for some hedgehogs and not for others.

HEDGEHOGS THAT CAN PROBABLY BE LEFT IN THE WILD

If the hedgehog is a regular visitor to your garden, is only seen at night, appears active and you are prepared to feed it every night then it can be left in the wild. See notes on feeding and feeding stations.

However if the hedgehog goes off its food, wobbles and staggers or starts coming out in the day or you notice it has green slimy poo especially if there is blood in it, then it needs extra help asap (see basic first aid).

Even if you have to bring a hedgehog in do keep putting food outside for at least a few more nights, as there may be siblings or other autumn juveniles making the most of your hospitality. If the food does not go you could still continue to provide dry cat biscuits – these will not go off as quickly as tinned food so are less wasteful.

It is helpful if you can weigh your visitor once a week to ensure it is putting on weight and doing well. Any under 250gms are likely to be genuine orphans and should be rescued.

HEDGEHOGS THAT ARE PROBABLY BEST RESCUED

Hedgehogs are nocturnal so those out in the day are displaying odd behaviour. Even though they appear lively and are rushing around these hedgehogs probably need rescuing. Once out in the day they can be days away from death. Even when rescued they can seem OK for a day or so and then suddenly collapse and die. So if out in the day whether rushing

about or curled up asleep they need rescuing. Hedgehogs do NOT hibernate in the open. They make a nest of leaves etc and disappear into the depths of the nest and are completely hidden. Hedgehogs under 450gms (1lb) that appear to be hibernating (cold and in a tight ball) are suffering from hypothermia and are in fact dying. These must be rescued if they are to stand any chance of survival.

As a general rule, from November, those under 450gms (1lb) may be rescued whether they are out day or night. This can be difficult to determine as the further north you are the earlier winter will appear – if in doubt call BHPS on 01584 890 801 for advice and to find a carer near you. In October small ones seen away from your garden e.g. crossing the road at night may also be best rescued as they may not have a ready supply of food as ones regularly visiting your garden.

FEEDING

They can have specialist hedgehog food, mashed up meat-based dog or cat food mixed with a little cereal (weetabix, bran or wholemeal bread) to give it some bulk. They can also have meat based cat biscuits, as these are good for the teeth. Other titbits can include cooked (unprocessed) chicken and raw mince. They will also need a dish of water, especially if dry biscuits are eaten.

BASIC FIRST AID

Line a high-sided box (hedgehogs are good climbers) with newspaper and put it in a warm room. Pick the hedgehog up using a towel and place it in the box; use that towel as some bedding for it. If the hedgehog is lethargic, cold, wobbles and staggers then it needs a hot water bottle or similar. These hedgehogs need more intensive care and are best passed on to a hedgehog rehabilitator. Cover the bottle with a towel and place the hedgehog on this but still with its towel covering it. The water in the bottle will need to be hand hot and should be changed every few hours to keep it warm. Alternatives to hot water

bottles are pop bottles full of hot water, ice cream or margarine tubs full of water with the lid on, wheat bags (cover with a small plastic bag to prevent it becoming soiled) a pet snuggle safe or heat pad or a reptile heat mat. Do not use back warming pads for human use, as they are not designed to be urinated on! Provide food and water and then SEEK ADVICE (including local contacts) - telephone us or visit our website – see cover. If you can weigh the hedgehog this will give the carer a better idea of whether you have a hoglet, a juvenile or an adult. Many autumn juveniles will have lungworms that in turn can cause breathing difficulties. Those already showing problems i.e. out in the day will be most at risk and are likely to have the highest worm burdens. Symptoms may include lack of appetite, no weight gain even when eating, coughing and rapid breathing. These will need worming and antibiotics so are best passed to a rehabilitator who can arrange veterinary treatment.

OVER-WINTERING

If you are going to over-winter the hedgehog yourself it should be weighed daily initially as it can be difficult to tell whether it is eating or just walking through the food. If it stays the same weight over a few days or loses weight then it is best to pass it on to someone with more experience. Provide the food mentioned previously and once it is about 600gms (22oz) it can gradually be introduced to a cooler temperature (a bit like hardening off plants). It can eventually go into a shed or garage but do keep feeding it. Let it decide when it wants to hibernate. If it does hibernate it may still wake occasionally so a dish of dry biscuits and water should be left with it just in case. The dry biscuits will not need to be changed as often as wet food. If it gets up to around 800gms (28oz) and the weather is mild then it can be released. If it was found in your garden or nearby then you can release it, late one evening into your garden - preferably into a ready-made nest site (see the hedgehog homes section of this booklet for details). You will also need to provide food and a feeding station. Otherwise release the hedgehog in the spring. Let the wild hedgehogs be your guide, if they are awake and around it is time for yours to go. However some males may start to become very restless and try to escape from their box. If this happens, once they are up to weight release them at the earliest opportunity otherwise they may become very stressed and could die.

FACT FILE

They have relatively *long legs* - about 10cms (4") - and these enable them to run as fast as we can walk.

Their front feet are shorter and broader than their back ones.

The claws on their *powerful front feet* are particularly useful for digging.

Each night (when not hibernating) hedgehogs will probably make a slow and apparently haphazard search for food and will *travel* between 2-3kms (1-2 miles).

They have small bright eyes but cannot see very well. At night they will use their excellent *sense of smell* and hearing to guide them.

Their weight will be largely determined by the food they get, but most one-year olds will weigh between 450-680gms (1-1½lbs).

Self-anointing is an activity only hedgehogs do. It seems to be connected with strange smells or tastes that cause them to produce large quantities of frothy saliva. They then spread the foam over their spines by flicking it with their tongue.

If a young hedgehog survives its early life in the nest and then its first hibernation, it can expect to live for **4 or 5 years** longer. By this time it will be getting old but might live to the age of ten.

Generally they lead *solitary* lives and tend to go out of their way to avoid other hedgehogs, except during the mating season.

Like most mammals the hedgehog has a *characteristic smell* and this will usually warn other hedgehogs to *keep out of the way*.

In the mating season the male may be attracted by the different smell of the female and commence a rather prolonged and noisy courtship with her.

Hedgehogs do not pair bond - the female raises her young unaided by the male.

Litters of young, called hoglets, are born from May to as late as September and average about 2 to 6 in number. At about 4 weeks of age they venture out of their nest with their mothers and at about 6-8 weeks old they leave the nest and wander off on their own - they weigh around 250gms (8oz) at this stage.

HIBERNATION



If you want to attract wildlife to your garden leave wild areas and avoid tidying up too much. Hedgehogs tend to hibernate between November and mid March and may choose the stack of leaves or branches in your garden. For this reason if you have to get rid of such material move it to a different spot before setting fire to it - a hedgehog may be sheltering or hibernating in it. They like to nest under things such as sheds, hedges and brushwood and they need plenty of dry leaves to build their nest.

HIBERNATION-What is it?

Hibernation is a complicated and often perilous energy conservation strategy. It is not just 'going to sleep.' In sleep all bodily functions remain nearly normal but in hibernation the metabolism is almost at a standstill.

HIBERNATION- Why?

Like all other animals, hedgehogs need energy in order to maintain normal body activities, to grow and to move about. This energy comes from their food (slugs, beetles, caterpillars, snails etc). As the weather gets colder such food becomes more difficult to find and so they decide to slow down their use of energy.

HIBERNATION-How?

They become immobile, their bodies cool and their normal physiological activities are slowed down e.g. their heart rate decreases

from approximately 190 beats per minute to a faint 20 per minute, the body temperature, which is normally 35°C drops to 10°C or less and respiration almost stops (they will breathe about once every few minutes).

HIBERNATION- When?

This is very dependent on the prevailing weather conditions and starts when the temperature in the immediate surroundings becomes and remains relatively low, which in Britain is usually November, December or even January. There also appears to be an internal readiness that brings about certain physiological changes.

HIBERNATION- Where?

Towards the end of the autumn, hedgehogs consider the best places to build nests (called hibernacula). Favourite sites are under hedges and roots of trees, in piles of brushwood, inside compost heaps or in old rabbit burrows and underneath timber buildings and sheds. The nest itself is ramshackle in appearance but well constructed from old dry leaves, grass and other vegetation, and can be up to 50cm (20inches) thick.

HIBERNATION- Is it continuous?

Most hedgehogs seem to wake up fairly frequently during their hibernation but rarely leave their nests. These arousals last a day or two and, although generally unprompted, they may be caused by a disturbance or unexpectedly hot weather. Should the weather become too cold hedgehogs will not bother to add extra insulation to their original nest but will go and build another one.

HIBERNATION- Is it necessary?

Hedgehogs in warmer climatic zones appear to be able to manage quite well without hibernating. The descendants of British hedgehogs acclimatised in New Zealand only seem to hibernate for short periods in July and August. Even in Britain, if there is enough food and the air temperature is not too low, hedgehogs need not hibernate. This applies especially to those that may be kept indoors through winter - e.g. youngsters found in the Autumn, weighing less than 450gms (1lb) and thus being vulnerable to problems during and just after hibernation.

HIBERNATION - Is it dangerous?

Because hedgehogs are immobile during hibernation they are very vulnerable to climate and disturbance. Hence, the need for a protective hibernacula. They are also at particular risk if the air temperature falls too low (e.g. below freezing point ice crystals may form in their blood). If the environment cools below this temperature, their body functions have to “switch on” again and this may arouse the animal to activity. Hibernation is a complex process and if any functions fail it can lead to the hedgehog’s death.

HIBERNATION- How long?

Usually, hibernation ends about mid-March to early April but this may vary from one area to another and in years with exceptional weather conditions.

HIBERNATION- Has it human implications?

If the mechanisms of hibernation could be applied to humans, perhaps astronauts and other explorers could make long duration expeditions without having to carry large quantities of food. Since during hibernation, physical damage is less traumatic to an animal’s body, there is also medical interest in hibernation as a way of improving the tolerance of human bodies to major surgical operations.

GARDENING “WITH” HEDGEHOGS

Hedgehogs are considered the gardener’s friend as they can help keep some of the garden pests under control. However whilst they can give us the pleasure of seeing them as they wander across our gardens late at night we can cause them a lot of problems with our gardening activities. The following advice should help to reduce some of the problems that they might encounter in our gardens.

Bonfires - use a proper incinerator or move the pile to be burnt just before setting fire to it. This should ensure that no hedgehog has made a home in the rubbish. Do not burn or trim pampas grass until you are sure there are no hedgehogs nesting in it.

Netting - keep all pea-netting a foot above the ground so the hedgehogs

can go under it and will not try to go through it and become stuck. The same applies to tennis nets, football nets etc. Barbed wire should also be kept off the ground and never left trailing or carelessly discarded.

Ponds - provide escape routes e.g. plastic coated wire over the side and into the water to make a ladder, or when making a pond have a gentle slope to at least one of the sides. Keep ponds topped up, especially in hot weather so hedgehogs are less likely to topple in. Children's paddling pools and sandpits are also a danger when filled with rainwater. Keep pots etc that might fill with water upside down. Provide a shallow dish of water for all visiting wildlife.

Drains - keep drain holes covered: this stops both leaves and hedgehogs blocking the drain. Check uncovered drains, bean trenches, holes for footings etc and garage inspection pits daily to make sure no hedgehogs are trapped. Provide escape routes if possible e.g. rigid plastic netting or a plank.

Fences - repair wooden fences that blow down in the wind etc as soon as possible or hedgehogs may be tempted to make their nests underneath them. Leave a hole in fences or newly constructed walls so the hedgehogs can come and go. Use environmentally safe wood preservatives on sheds, fences etc as hedgehogs often lick new smells or substances – your garden centre should be able to advise. Very occasionally hedgehogs are found with a leg trapped inbetween the gaps in log rolls (used for edging) so check these and other hazards regularly.

Wild Patches - STRIMMERS MUTILATE - take care when mowing long grass and tidying wild patches, as they are an ideal place for a hedgehog's nest. When cutting long overgrown areas cut initially to about a foot long and then check for hedgehogs and other wildlife before cutting any lower. Providing a suitable nesting or hibernating box can help prevent accidental disturbance. Bin bags left at ground level will also attract hedgehogs and they may try to nest in them and get put out for the dustcart.

Compost - another ideal place for a hedgehog to make a nest and rear its young. Take care when turning the heap; one thrust of a fork can

easily kill more than one baby hedgehog. The safest time to spread the heap is probably Oct/Nov when most babies have left their mum and adults have not yet started to hibernate. Partly used bags of compost may also have nesting hedgehogs in them.

Slug Pellets - try alternatives, REMEMBER METALDEHYDE SLUG PELLETS CAN KILL, if you must use them, use sparingly and pick up the dead slugs and snails as soon as possible. Read the directions for use before you use the product.

Sheds - do not suddenly decide to keep doors closed which have previously been left open for some weeks without first checking that there is no nesting hedgehog inside. Keep chemicals, oil etc in both sheds and garages out of the reach of hedgehogs. We receive a lot of calls in June from people dismantling sheds that find a mother with babies under it – so do take care or dismantle in October when the hoglets have left the nest and hibernation may not have started.

Dogs – also share the garden with the hedgehogs. If you have a dog that you know attacks hedgehogs try to warn the hedgehog when the dog is being let out e.g. turn on an outside light a minute or so before letting the dog out. Also for the dogs final patrol of the evening you might consider putting him on his lead. These precautions are only necessary at night. You may notice that hedgehogs have their own routine i.e. they appear at a certain time from a certain point. If this is observed keep the dog in during those times.

Not all the above suggestions will be practical for one reason or another but be aware of the dangers of some of your gardening activities and try to minimise these dangers.

The above are ways to help visiting hedgehogs but if you want to actively encourage them into your garden you can provide food in suitable feeding stations and nesting sites (e.g. a pile of leaves in a quiet corner of the garden). Recent surveys suggest that hedgehog numbers are in decline so anything you can do to help them will be appreciated. They are particularly vulnerable in the autumn when they are fattening up for hibernation and extra food then can be a lifesaver.

Feeding - to encourage a hedgehog to stay in or near your garden ensure it has a fresh supply of water available - especially in very hot weather - and leave a dish of food in a place where the hedgehog can get it, but not the local cats (e.g. under something low). See pages 15 & 20 for info on creating a feeding station.

It is not advisable to take a hedgehog from the wild and put it into your garden nor to take one from your garden and home it elsewhere. If this is done and there are young they may die once their parent is removed. Also the new area may be unsuitable.

Finally if you do accidentally disturb a nest with an adult hedgehog in it, replace the nesting material. The hedgehog can then either repair the nest or build another elsewhere. If the disturbed hedgehog is hibernating and wakes up, a dish of food and some water each night until it starts hibernating again would be helpful.

If there are babies in the nest, again replace the nesting material, handling the nest as little as possible so as not to leave your smell on it. Keep an eye on the nest to see if mum returns. If there is no sign of her by the next morning telephone the BHPS for advice and a local contact. Do not allow friends, children etc to uncover the nest for a peep. If the mother has returned, she may abandon or even eat her young if she is disturbed again.

EVEN MORE ABOUT HEDGEHOGS!

Where did the hedgehog come from?

The hedgehog comes from an ancient family and fossils suggest that hedgehog-like creatures have been on the earth for about 15 million years.

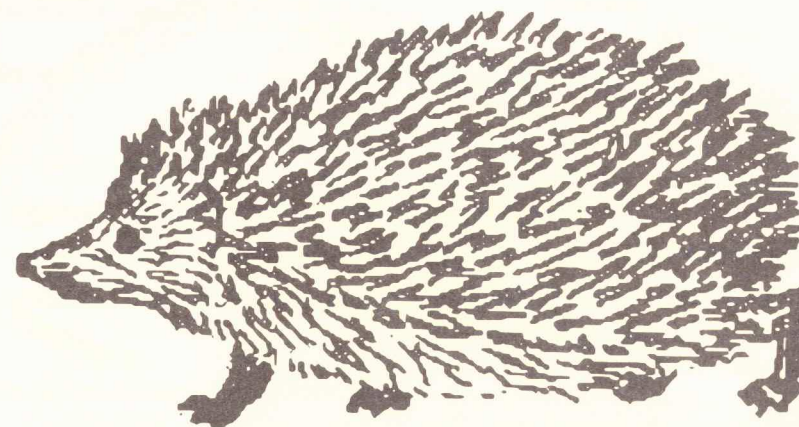
Has it any relations?

The modern hedgehog has no close relatives amongst other mammals although it may have distant links with moles and shrews. It belongs to a family all on its own and has developed along a separate evolutionary

line for millions of years. The family has a dozen or so species, five in SE Asia, three in Africa and two in China but no indigenous ones in the Americas or in Australasia. Our British hedgehog is the same species that occurs in most of the continent of Europe and is called *Erinaceus europaeus*. It has been introduced into New Zealand.

What does a hedgehog look like?

Who doesn't know?



What's on the outside?

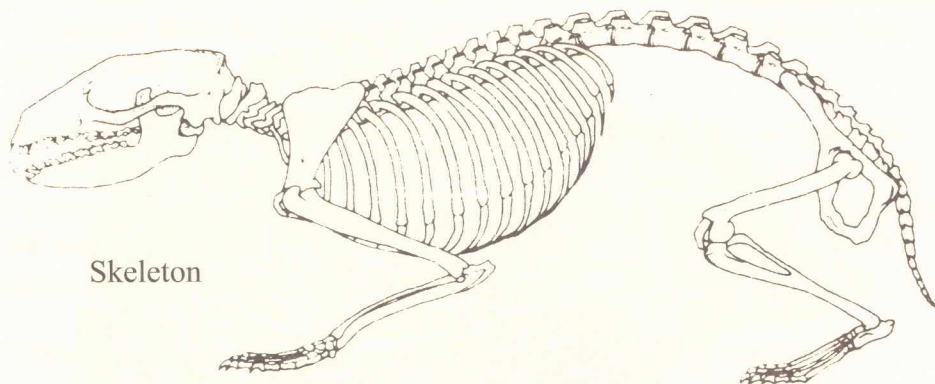
Of course the hedgehog is characterised by its spines. These are modified hairs, about 2-3cms (1 inch) long, which cover the back of its head and body. As a hedgehog grows the number of its spines increases until an adult has between 5000 and 7000. By this time it will be somewhere between 20-30cms (8inch-12inch) in length but its tail will be less than 2-3cms (1 inch) long.

Whole spine



And what about the inside?

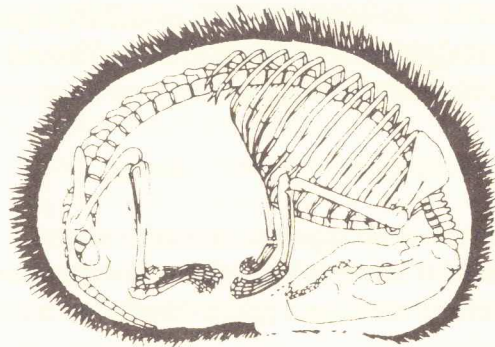
Under the prickles the hedgehog has a remarkable system of muscles that are designed to raise and lower its spines. When it is frightened it will tighten the muscles around its flanks and curl up. Its soft parts are thus completely guarded by a defensive cover of prickles that few enemies can penetrate. But what about its bones? Have a look at the diagram of a hedgehog's skeleton.



Skeleton

Scientists have discovered very little unusual about the hedgehog's skeleton except the shortness of the neck. This probably helps it to roll up into a compact ball more easily. However, the hedgehog's peculiar ability to roll itself into a ball, and to stay in this position for a long time (especially during hibernation), is made possible by the powerful muscle that covers its back like a cape. A look at the X-ray picture of a rolled up hedgehog will make it clear why this self-defence mechanism means that it has fewer enemies than any other mammal of similar proportions.

X-ray view of a rolled up hedgehog.



APPLICATION TO JOIN BRITISH HEDGEHOG PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Title: _____ Name: _____

Address (please print): _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone No: _____ Age (if under 16) _____

I/We wish to enrol as:

Minimum Annual Individual UK £7.50 / Overseas £20.00

Minimum Annual Family / Group UK £12.50 / Overseas £25.00

Minimum Life Membership (single payment) UK £300.00 / Overseas £500.00

I/We enclose Cheque/Postal Orders/Cash £ _____

Please make cheques payable to: British Hedgehog Preservation Society

Please tick box if you require information on WILLS ☐ PAYROLL GIVING ☐

How did you learn of the Society e.g. advert/show etc _____

**IF YOU ARE A TAX PAYER, BY SIGNING THE GIFT AID
DECLARATION OVERLEAF, YOU CAN HELP BOOST THE SOCIETY'S
INCOME AT NO COST TO YOURSELF**

Please return completed forms to:

BHPS, Hedgehog House, Dhustone, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 3PL



GIFT AID DECLARATION - Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the BHPS from the tax you pay for the current tax year.

Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick this box: ☐

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £_____ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to:

The British Hedgehog Preservation Society.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Title: _____ First Name or Initial(s): _____

Surname: _____

Full Home Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Date: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

BANKER'S STANDING ORDER

Please return this form to us rather than setting up membership online with your bank or by sending this form direct to your bank because we may miss making you a supporter if we do not process your Standing Order through our office.

To The Manager: _____ Bank/Building Society

Address of Bank/Building Society: _____

PLEASE PAY TO THE NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK, LUDLOW (Sorting Code 53-81-18) FOR THE CREDIT OF BRITISH HEDGEHOG PRESERVATION SOCIETY ACCOUNT NUMBER 02935546 the sum of (minimum £7.50)

_____ POUNDS _____ PENCE (£ _____) NOW, AND

THEREAFTER ANNUALLY EVERY 1st _____ UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE IN

WRITING FROM ME/US.

Bank/Building Society Account Number: _____

Signature: _____

Please Print Title: _____ Name: _____

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Acknowledgements and Further Reading

The use of information and the reproduction of illustrations from 'Hedgehogs' by Dr. Pat Morris is gratefully acknowledged. The updated 'Hedgehogs' book by Dr Pat Morris (Whittet Books 2015, price £14.99) is available from the British Hedgehog Preservation Society or good bookshops. Dr Morris is the country's leading hedgehog expert and his book gives factual, down to earth information on hedgehog behaviour, habits, physiology and private life, illustrated with delightful and amusing drawings by Guy Troughton. We also thank Hilary Whyart for the illustration on the front cover of this booklet.

'Hedgehog Rehabilitation' by Kay Bullen VN was published by BHPS to celebrate its 20th Anniversary on 2002 (revised and updated in 2010) and is a must have book for rehabilitators and hedgehog enthusiasts alike. 'Hedgehog Rehabilitation' costs £12.00 plus p&p and is available from the British Hedgehog Preservation Society.