

BUILD YOUR OWN HEDGEHOG HOME

When?

Hedgehog homes can be used throughout the year but these are key dates in the Hedgehog's diary:

- **Hibernation: approximately November - April**
- **Breeding season/nesting: May.** New hoglets (baby hedgehogs) may remain in the nest until June/July
- **Summer shelter: July - September.** Hedgehogs will use the shelter in poor weather or as protection from predators

Where?

Hedgehogs can be a little fussy about where they live. The box needs to be out of direct sunlight and the front entrance should be out of the wind (make sure the entrance to the house does not face North or North East).

Find a quiet area against a bank, wall, fence or in vegetation (if you pick an area with slugs, you will provide a natural food source).

Building your Hedgehog Home

1. You can use a plastic or wooden upturned box to create the main compartment. This will keep your hedgehogs safe from unwanted attention and keep them protected from the weather.
2. Create an entrance about 14cm square in one end of the crate. Avoid leaving rough edges.
3. Inside you can make it more inviting to hedgehogs by covering the floor with soil and leaves, or even torn up newspaper and a few small sticks.
4. Fill the entrance chamber with a layer of dead, dry leaves. Hedgehogs prefer small leaves such as birch, oak, hawthorn or hazel.
5. Cover the outside in a pile of woody garden cuttings, moss and leaves. You can, if you like, even cover it with soil, leaving just the entrance hole and ventilation pipe free.

Aftercare

It's worth clearing out the hedgehog home, every year or two. The ideal time is in October before they go into hibernation, and after most of the litters have been weaned. It can also be done in April, after hibernation but before breeding season.



Before cleaning make sure there are no hedgehogs in the home. To do this put a small, light obstruction in the entrance to see whether it is pushed away overnight, this can be a scrunched-up tissue or a few twigs. If the obstruction isn't moved then you should be fine to go ahead and clean the hedgehog house out (but take care just in case).

How else can you help Hedgehogs?

Hedgehog Highways - Hedgehogs travel around one mile every night through our parks and gardens in their quest to find enough food and a mate. By making holes in or under our garden fences and walls for them to pass through we can make their lives a little easier!

Feed the Hedgehogs - Food and fresh water will help hedgehogs. Leave out foods like minced meat, tinned dog or cat food (not fish-based), crushed cat biscuits, or chopped boiled eggs. Do not feed hedgehogs milk; instead provide plain, fresh water in a shallow bowl.

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