

BRITISH HEDGEHOG PRESERVATION SOCIETY

A guide to helping hedgehogs



Photo Mrs Pat Morris

- 1** Stop using pesticides and slug pellets in your garden. Not only can these harm hedgehogs but also damage their food chain. Use organic methods instead.
- 2** Make sure hedgehogs have easy access to your garden. Ensure boundary fences or walls have 13cm x 13cm square gaps in the bottom to allow hedgehogs to pass through. Keep a corner of your garden wild to offer shelter, protection and natural food for hedgehogs and other wildlife. Encourage hedgehogs into your garden, but you should never just move one in from another area, as it may well have a nest of dependent young that you would be condemning to death.
- 3** Provide a shallow dish of fresh water for all wildlife, and offer food such as meaty hedgehog food, meaty cat or dog food or cat biscuits for hedgehogs, especially during long dry spells.
- 4** Make or buy a hedgehog home, this offers a hibernation site that is safer from predators in the winter. It may also be used as a nesting box for a mother and her hoglets in the warmer months. The British Hedgehog Preservation Society can provide a leaflet on building a hedgehog home and sells one in its shop (see www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk or contact details below).
- 5** Check areas thoroughly for hedgehogs and other wildlife before strimming or mowing. Keep pea netting 22-30cms (9-12 inches) off the ground so that hedgehogs can pass safely under and plants will grow to the netting.
- 6** Dispose of litter responsibly. Every year hedgehogs are injured by litter and starve to death after getting trapped in discarded rubbish.
- 7** Bonfires offer a tempting home for a hedgehog. Ideally, collected materials should be re-sited just before the fire is to be lit, if this is not possible, the base should be lifted up with poles or broom handles (not a fork!) and a torch shone in to look (and listen) for any wildlife or pets in need of rescue before lighting. Once checked, light from one side only to allow an escape route for anything you may have missed.
- 8** Hedgehogs are good swimmers but can become trapped in ponds or pools with sheer sides. Keep water levels topped up, provide a gently sloping edge if possible or place half submerged rocks and ramps in the water as an escape for them.
- 9** Cattle grids can be a problem, hedgehogs fall in and become trapped, a simple ramp placed in the grid will save lives. The surface should be rough to enable the escapee to gain a foothold. Holes in the ground should be covered over or surrounded by a barrier that keeps hedgehogs out.
- 10** Take care on the roads, hedgehogs are nocturnal so are out at night. A hedgehog's natural defence mechanism is to roll into a ball - this is no match for a vehicle.



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