

# *British Hedgehog Preservation Society*

## **Hedgehogs In Enclosed Gardens**



YOU SHOULD ONLY CONSIDER KEEPING HEDGEHOGS IN ENCLOSED GARDENS IF THEY CANNOT COPE IN THE WILD BECAUSE OF AN INJURY (eg 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).

**Part of the**

# **Know your Hedgehog**

**series**

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[www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk)*

*If you are lucky enough to acquire a hedgehog in need of a safe environment the following will help you to look after him/her.*

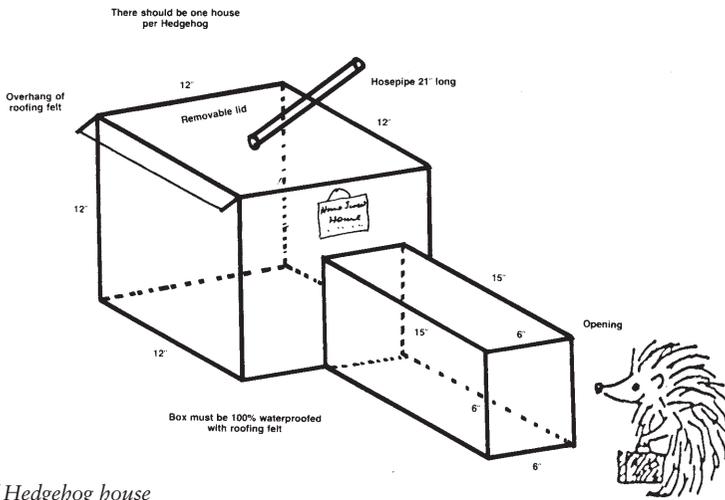
### HOUSING A HEDGEHOG

Line box with thick newspaper on base and fill with dry straw or leaves. If the hedgehog has fleas sprinkle a little Johnson's Small Animal Insecticide Powder onto newspaper (and on hedgehog if possible), or any flea powder that contains Pyrethrum and is suitable for cage birds, to deter fleas and ticks. Flea treatments for cats or dogs are too strong for hedgehogs. See BHPS leaflet 'HEDGEHOG HOMES' for further ideas on making a suitable house, or the BHPS Hogalogue or online shop for ready made homes.

**Emergency house - short term.** Bag of straw, knot open end, punch hole at ground level and poke 3-4 holes with finger on top. Place on ground.

**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.**



*Diagram of Hedgehog house*

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 your Hedgehog*

#### **DIET:**

- 1) Hedgehog Food
- 2) Meaty Cat or dog food
- 3) Cat biscuits
- 4) **CHOPPED UNSALTED** peanuts
- 5) Sunflower hearts (not seeds)

The daily meal should consist of meat from any of the above and 2 sorts of fibre from the above list. **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. 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.

### *Caring for the health of ' your ' 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 (1⅓-2¼lb). 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.

- *Dust around the ears and eyes* is probably mange mite. See vet or hedgehog carer.
- *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.
- **FOR VET:** to examine a hedgehog - Anaesthetise with Halothane Gas. Ketamine will 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* - (eg torn out claws) - See vet or hedgehog carer.

### *Miscellaneous*

*Fleas* - can be controlled by sprinkling hog on back with Johnson's Small Animal Insecticide Powder or any organic powder containing pyrethrum. 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 'your' 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 his 'owners'.

*For further information please send a s.a.e. to:-*  
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