

BRITISH HEDGEHOG PRESERVATION SOCIETY

A guide to helping hedgehogs



Photo Mrs Pat Morris

1 Avoid 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 with CD case sized gaps in the bottom of boundary fences or walls. 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 food such as meat based pet food or unsweetened museli moistened with water for hedgehogs, especially during long dry spells.

4 Make or buy a hedgehog home, this offers a hibernation site safe 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 (see contact details over).

5 Check areas thoroughly for hedgehogs and other wildlife before strimming or mowing. Keep pea netting 22-30cms (9 - 12") off the ground so hedgehogs can pass under and plants will grow to the netting.

6 Dispose of litter responsibly. Every year hedgehogs are injured by litter and starve to death by 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 for any wildlife or pets in need of rescue before lighting.

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 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.

10 Finally, take care on the roads, hedgehogs are nocturnal so are often seen out at night. A hedgehog's natural defence mechanism is to roll into a ball - this is no match for a motor vehicle.