

A Living Garden for hedgehogs and other wildlife



For such a small animal, hedgehogs range over a surprisingly large area and in a single night a male hedgehog can travel 2-3kms. Green spaces such as parks, allotments and playing fields are not large enough to sustain hedgehog populations alone. They need large interconnected areas of feeding, nesting and hibernation habitat and access to many gardens.

Our modern landscape, fragmented by houses, roads, walls, fences and farming, is an increasingly difficult place for hedgehogs to navigate safely. Reversing the decline of hedgehogs will be a challenge, but creating a network of Living Gardens linked into a rich Living Landscape is a good place to start.



Don't use slug pellets or pesticides. Hedgehogs eat slugs.

Provide log piles, long grass, rotting leaves and nectar-rich flowers to encourage worms, beetles, caterpillars, millipedes and earwigs, as these are the mainstay of a hedgehog's diet.



Make your garden safe for hedgehogs. They are good swimmers, but if you have a pond they need a way to climb out. Check too for netting, which hedgehogs can get tangled in if not tightly secured.



Make sure there are hedgehog-sized gaps in your garden fence, and encourage your neighbours to do the same. A 13cm/5" gap should allow even the largest hedgehog through.

Cut a hole in a wooden panel, make a gap under your gate, or ask a contractor to include a hole in a newly installed concrete gravel board. Dig under your fence to avoid cutting, or use a tunnel cinder block to deter use by pets.



Extra food and water can be a great help, but can't substitute natural foraging habitat. Tinned dog food, mixed with crushed dog biscuits and a little water, or a specialist hedgehog food will help supplement their diet. Never put out bread and milk as it makes hedgehogs ill.



Be less tidy! Let autumn leaves rot where they fall or rake them into piles. Long grass areas are best cut in winter and bramble areas in autumn. Check for hedgehogs when you cut long grass or bramble, as these areas are used for nesting.

Look for droppings, set up a night camera, make a footprint tunnel or a feeding station to see if you have a visiting hedgehog. Hedgehog droppings are dark, textured and contain shiny bits of invertebrate.

