



# HEDGEHOGS

All about **Hedgehogs**



**Derbyshire**  
Wildlife Trust





# Hedgehog Facts

**Common name:**  
European Hedgehog

**Scientific name:**  
Erinaceus europaeus

**Family:**  
Erinaceidae

**Size and appearance:**  
Small, brown and round, with yellow-tipped spines over its back, and a fur-covered face.  
Length: 15–30cm.  
Tail: 1–2cm

**Habitat:**  
Grassland,  
Farmland,  
Woodland,  
Towns and Gardens.

**Origin:**  
Native

**Predators:**  
Badgers and foxes, although rarely as hedgehogs are well protected with their spines.

**Diet:**  
Invertebrates, as well as amphibians, birds eggs, beetles, earthworms and slugs



## More about Hedgehogs

### Daily Life

A hedgehog is normally a solitary, nocturnal animal. During spring and summer days it sleeps in a temporary nest and wakes up at dusk to venture out and hunt for food.

### Did you know?

Hedgehogs are noisy animals, snuffling loudly as they shuffle through the undergrowth. They have poor eyesight but an acute sense of smell, touch and hearing. Hedgehogs are known for their ability to roll themselves into a ball of spines when threatened. These spines are actually modified hairs and the average hedgehog has about 7000 of them, which can

be raised using powerful muscles along their back.

A group of hedgehogs is called an 'array' but they are usually solitary creatures preferring to be alone and only occur in groups when a family is together.

Hedgehogs give birth in June/July and have an average litter of four or five. A baby hedgehog is called a hoglet!

Hedgehogs can travel around 2 miles in an evening, looking for food!

Hedgehogs are known to self-anoint (cover their spines in frothy saliva), and current thinking is that this is a form of defence.





# Hedgehogs need your help!



In just the last 10 years, hedgehog numbers have fallen dramatically and there are now thought to be fewer than one million left in the UK. They need your help – please make your garden a hedgehog haven.

## Make hedgehog highways

As hedgehogs can travel around 2 miles in an evening, looking for food, it is critical that they can access a wide range of gardens. Holes in walls or fences of 13 x 13 cm (5 x 5") will let hedgehogs through but be too small for most pets to get through.



## Make ponds safe

Use a pile of stones, a piece of wood or some chicken wire to create a simple ramp. Hedgehogs can swim but if they do fall in the pond they need to be able to climb out!



“ There are now thought to be less than a million hedgehogs in the UK. ”





# What else can you do?

## Check before strimming

Hedgehogs will not run away from the sound of a mower or strimmer – check before you cut and avoid causing injuries or death.

## Check for hoglets

In late summer and early autumn it is not unusual to come across very small hedgehogs born late in the season. These will not have enough fat to see them through hibernation and have to be fed and kept warm over winter and released the following spring. Please contact your local hedgehog/wildlife charity for advice if you find a sick or injured hedgehog.



## Create wild spaces

Create a wild area in your garden where the hedgehogs may nest. Let the plants and shrubs grow wild and don't cut them back.

[www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)

## Be careful with bonfires

Piles of debris are irresistible to a hedgehog looking for somewhere to hibernate or nest – build your bonfire on the day of burning or move the pile on the day of burning to avoid a tragic end to a hedgehog's life.

[www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)

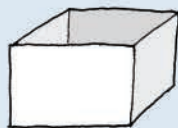




# Make a simple hedgehog house

## You will need:

- Medium-sized plastic storage box



- Stanley knife



- Leaf litter



- Dry grass or straw



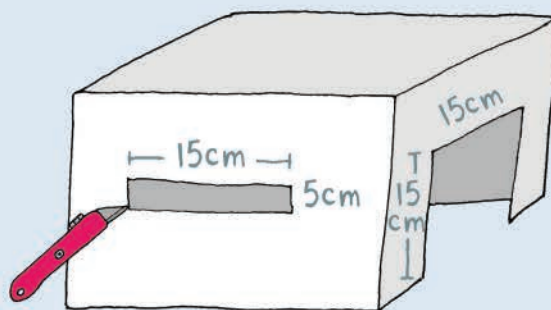
- Carrier bag



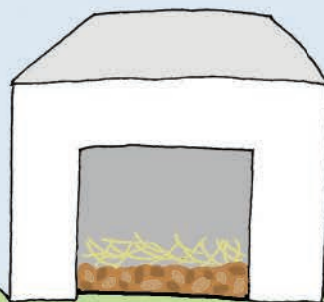
- Twigs and dry leaves



- 1 Cut two side air vents and an entrance into the plastic box.

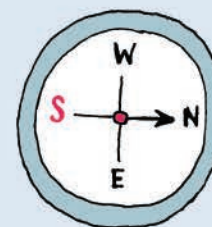
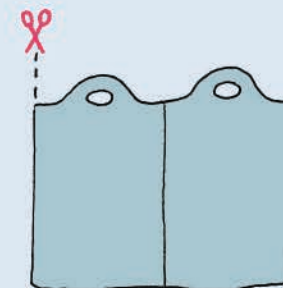


- 2 Put some leaf litter inside the box, with clean, dry grass or straw on top.



- 3 Tuck the box near a hedge (with the entrance facing south if possible).

- 4 Put an opened-up carrier bag over the top of the box, then cover with twigs, dry grass and leaves.







## Craft activity: spikey hedgehog models

Grab some clay, Play-Doh or salt dough and mould it into a round body shape. Create a point at one end to make the face.

Go outdoors and hunt for some thin sticks, then break them into short lengths and push them into the body to create the

spines. Hunt for some tiny stones of other natural materials to mark out some eyes.

If using clay, leave your hedgehog to dry and then you can choose to paint it or leave it natural. Have fun!



## Feeding hedgehogs

Hedgehogs really benefit from extra food, using it as a supplement to their natural diet. Put out fresh food at dusk and don't forget a dish of fresh water!

Use meaty cat or dog food or specialist hedgehog food. Water can also be scarce at certain times of the year and is the only thing you should give them to drink.

Hedgehogs are lactose intolerant – never leave milk out to feed hedgehogs in your garden.



## Midnight visitors!

Hedgehogs are nocturnal, which means they sleep during the day, so you may not know you have any visitors. Whether you have an urban garden or live in the countryside, you may receive frequent visits from hedgehogs, wood mice and even badgers. You might be surprised at who makes an appearance!



## How else can you help?

You can become a member of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust or you can donate to help us continue our work to help wildlife in Derbyshire.

Visit our website for more information:

[www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)







**Derbyshire**  
Wildlife Trust

# About **Derbyshire Wildlife Trust**

**We are a small charity with big ideas.**

We believe passionately that wildlife and natural processes need to have space to thrive, beyond designated nature reserves and other protected sites. To achieve this it is vital that the richest wildlife sites are protected and sustained as a starting point from which nature can spread back into our wider landscapes.

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