

FACTS SHEET *Hedgehogs*

Where do hedgehogs live?

Hedgehogs can be found in Europe, Asia, and Africa, and some were introduced to New Zealand, Australia or the Americas. There are **17 different species** of hedgehogs worldwide.

Hedgehogs are *nocturnal*, which means they are most active at night. Hedgehogs sleep for a large portion of the day under bushes, grasses, rocks, or most commonly in dens dug underground.



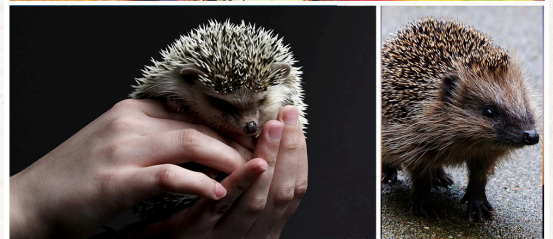
Hedgehog Awareness Week is observed on 5–11 May. The week aims to highlight the problems that hedgehogs face and how we can help to protect them.



What do hedgehogs eat?

Hedgehogs aren't fussy when it comes to food! Hedgehogs are *omnivores*, which means they eat both plants and insects.

Wild hedgehogs can help to get rid of insects in the garden by eating beetles, caterpillars, earthworms, slugs, and other bugs!



Why do hedgehogs have spines?

A hedgehog has sharp spines on its back to protect themselves from predators. Their spines are not poisonous, unlike the quills of a porcupine, and do not easily detach from their bodies. Hedgehogs' spines are made of *keratin*, the same material as human fingernails.



When a hedgehog feels threatened, he can roll into a tight ball, tucking in the furry face, feet, and belly. The spines provide sharp protection from predators.

Hedgehogs *hibernate* (sleep) in the winter to stay warm and save energy. How long they hibernate depends on temperature, species, and how much food they have.

Fun Facts About Hedgehogs

- Hedgehogs have about 44 teeth.
- Hedgehogs can swim and are good climbers, too!
- Hedgehogs have poor eyesight but excellent hearing and smell.
- Hedgehogs have about 5,000 to 7,000 spines on their backs.
- The average weight of a hedgehog is between 1 and 2 pounds, like a medium-sized pineapple.

Baby hedgehogs

Baby hedgehogs are called hoglets.

Baby hedgehogs are born in June and July in litters of 4 or 5. They are born with soft spines under the skin, and a second set of spines comes through after a couple of days.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP *A Hedgehogs*

Some people keep hedgehogs 🦔 as pets, but they need special care.

The lifespan of a hedgehog in the wild is around 3 - 7 years, but they can live up to 10 years in captivity.

Dangers to hedgehogs

Dogs and foxes can kill sick or young hedgehogs. Owls sometimes hunt for hedgehogs. But more are killed on roads.

Hedgehogs *are endangered*, which means the number of hedgehogs is falling. The main danger to hedgehogs is loss of habitat or places to live. They find it difficult to find places to make a nest.



Hedgehogs are an important friend to the gardener, eating slugs, snails, and insects. Providing nutritious food for them will encourage them to return to your garden.

What you can do to help a hedgehog

If you think you have a hedgehog in your garden, there are things you can do to help:

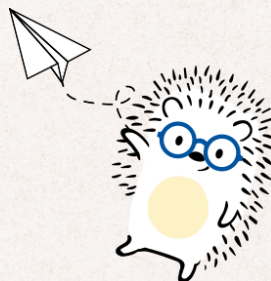
- Leave out water for the hedgehog, not milk.
- Leave out food such as dried hedgehog food or dog meat without gravy.

Hedgehogs 🦔 are lactose intolerant! In other words, they may have a stomach ache from drinking milk.

Put a hedgehog house in a quiet spot and leave some dry leaves nearby in autumn.

- Ask your family not to use slug pellets in the garden, as these can kill hedgehogs.

Do not disturb hedgehog nests!



This hedgehog house is in a quiet place where a hedgehog can sleep or hibernate. It has food inside. Foxes, coyotes, or cats cannot get in.

