



BRACKLEY HOGWATCH

**A community conservation project dedicated to growing a strong hedgehog population in Brackley and the surrounding five-mile radius
Registered Charity No. 1188770**

EASY GUIDE: Encouraging Hedgehogs into your Garden and How to Keep them Safe

Most importantly, hedgehogs need access into your garden. Then, by providing food and water and a safe place for them to forage, you will be increasing your chances of them visiting.

- Try cutting holes in fences, removing bricks from walls, or digging tunnels under your garden boundary. Gaps need to be 13x13cm, so they don't need to be large. Ask your neighbours to do the same and with their agreement create a Hedgehog Highway to help the hedgehogs roam freely from garden to garden.
- Make your garden attractive to hedgehogs by leaving areas to grow wild with piles of leaves, logs or compost. These will make perfect nests as well as encouraging invertebrates that hedgehogs feed on. You could also place hedgehog houses in your garden, preferably underneath bushes in a quiet shaded area avoiding the midday sun. These can be bought, or you could make your own (*see our Easy Guide: Building a Basic Hedgehog House*).
- Supplementary feed by leaving out tinned meaty dog/cat food and/or crushed cat or kitten biscuits. This is especially important during the winter months, for hedgehogs that haven't gone into hibernation, as their natural foods are less plentiful.
- Never feed hedgehogs bread and milk as they are lactose intolerant and milk can make them very ill.
- Do not feed mealworms, peanuts or sunflower hearts.
- Place a shallow dish of water in several places around the garden. Hedgehogs are very thirsty creatures, and this will help to prevent dehydration.
- Check the food and water bowls each day and top them up with fresh water and food, first removing any food that hasn't been eaten (especially important for any leftover wet



meat as this will help to avoid fly strike). Always clean the dishes outside (not in your kitchen) by using hot, soapy water and rinse well. This will help to reduce the risk of disease between different hedgehogs that might visit and eat from the same dish.

- Food can be placed anywhere in your garden but NOT near hedgehog houses. If you want to provide your visiting hogs with an enclosed place to eat why not build a feeding station? (see our *Easy Guide: Building a Basic Feeding Station*).
- Ponds should have an exit route and placing bricks, pebbles or stones at the edge of the pond will help to ensure that any visiting hogs can easily get out.
- Cover holes as hedgehogs can easily fall into uncovered drains or holes in the garden.
- Always check for hedgehogs before strimming or mowing, especially in long grass areas or under hedges where they might be resting during the day.
- Bonfires, ideally, should not be built until the day they are being lit as a hedgehog could be sleeping inside. Failing that, always thoroughly disturb bonfires thus giving any sleeping hedgehogs (plus other wildlife) the chance of escape.
- Check compost heaps and piles of leaves for nesting hedgehogs before forking over.
- Litter is dangerous to hedgehogs – they can get their heads stuck in tins and plastic bags. Make sure there's no litter in your garden. Plastic drinks rings should be cut up into small pieces and disposed of in your bin.
- Do not use slug pellets or pesticides – these can poison hedgehogs. Try using natural alternatives like crushed eggshells, coffee grounds, garlic spray or copper around your tender plants. The outdoor use of slug pellets containing metaldehyde was banned in Great Britain in March 2022.
- Don't close shed doors if you usually keep them open as there might be hedgehogs nesting inside. Dangerous chemicals or tools should be stored off from the ground.
- Check carefully underneath sheds or decking before you dismantle them as these are favoured places for nesting and hibernation hedgehogs.
- Any netting or wire in your garden should be at least a foot above ground level thus avoiding hedgehogs becoming tangled in it. Goal, tennis and fruit nets should be rolled up and put away when not in use.



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