



The Wildlife Trust for
**Lancashire
Manchester &
North Merseyside**

Help a Hog

— A SIMPLE GUIDE TO HELPING HEDGEHOGS THRIVE —
IN YOUR GARDEN



www.lancswt.org.uk

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They're snuffly, cute and loveable, they're a little bit weird and completely wonderful; but when was the last time you saw a hedgehog?

Though they're one of the UK's best-loved mammals, these once-common garden visitors are disappearing from under our very nose. In fact, hedgehog numbers are deteriorating as quickly as tiger populations are across the world.

While recent research offers a glimmer of hope for urban hogs, with their numbers appearing to stabilise, they are still vulnerable and rural hedgehog populations teeter on the edge. So, what can we do to help?

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Fast hoggy facts

- Hedgehogs live for around two – five years in the wild, though some have lived up to ten!
- Adult hedgehogs have up to 7,000 spines and a small, hidden tail.
- Some hedgehogs are blonde! It's a colour mutation called 'leucism' which is thought to be caused by recessive genes.
- Hedgehog spines are actually modified hairs made from keratin, the same stuff as your nails!
- William Shakespeare gave hedgehogs five minutes of fame in two plays, referring to them as 'hedgepigs' and 'urchins'.
- Hedgehogs hibernate between November and March but may wake up occasionally to eat, go to the toilet or change nest sites.
- Hedgehogs will de-slime particularly slippery slugs with their deft paws!
- Hedgehog poo is dark and up to 5cm long. If they've been eating lots of beetles it will be full of shimmering beetle wingcases.



What do hedgehogs eat?

Though hedgehogs are described as ‘the gardener’s friend’ due to their penchant for slugs, these slimy molluscs don’t actually make up the bulk of a hungry hog’s diet. Their favourite food is beetles, but they eat lots of other things too.

Beetles and their larvae



Earthworms

Ants

Flies and leatherjackets



Earwigs

Spiders



Millipedes and centipedes

Woodlice



Slugs and snails

Caterpillars

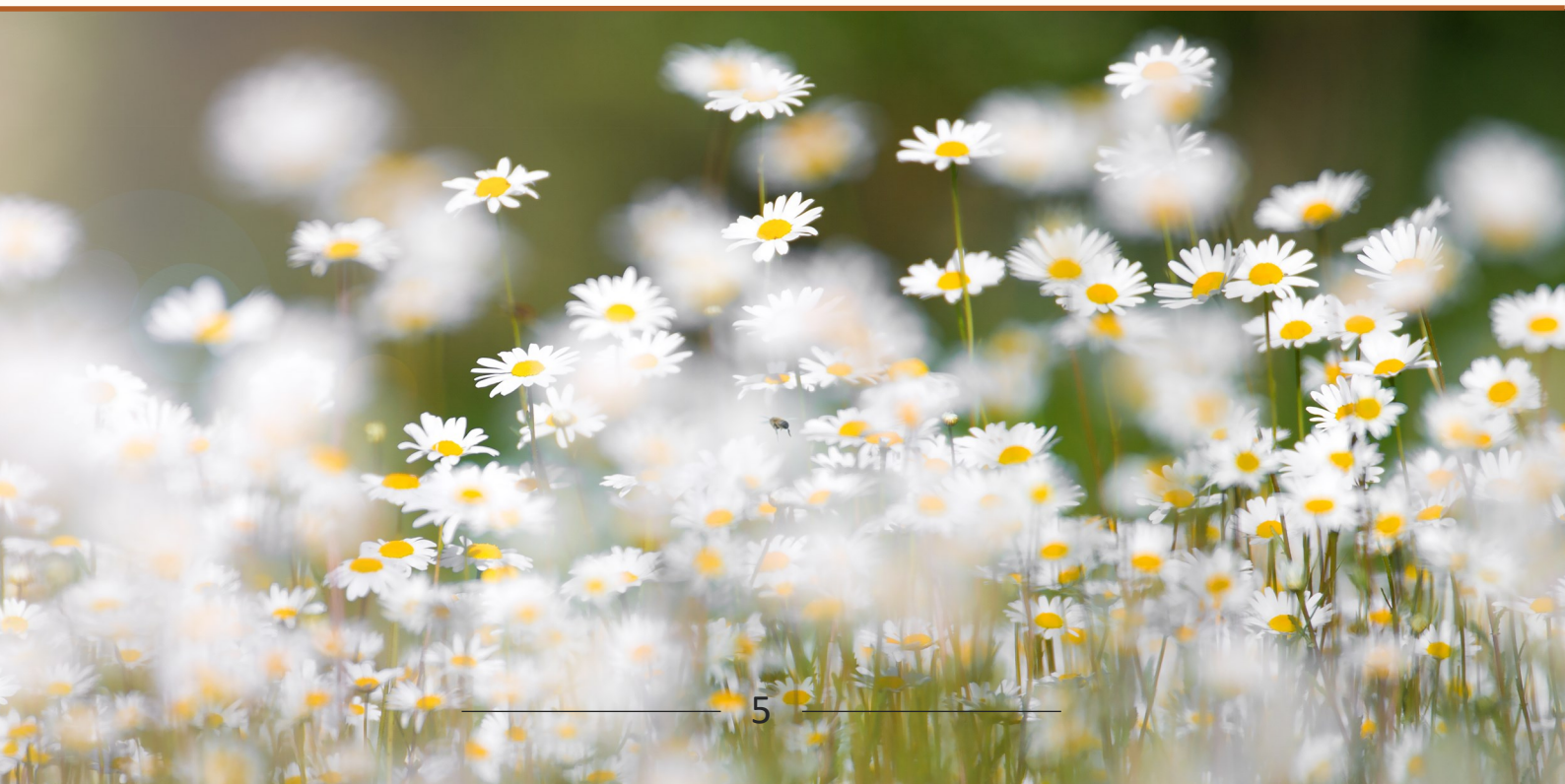
How can you help hedgehogs in your garden?

Gardens are crucial for hedgehogs, linking up fragmented habitats and feeding grounds with extra green space where they can safely hunt, hibernate and nest.



However, the UK's gardens are turning into poorer and poorer homes for wildlife. Paving, decking and the removal of grass, trees and plants mean hogs can no longer live their normal garden lifestyle.

Thankfully, by making some really simple changes, you can help make your garden as hedgehog-friendly as possible.



Teach yourself to 'un-garden'

Leave a wild corner

Gardens that are a little rougher around the edges benefit all kinds of wildlife, especially invertebrates. This means they're also fantastic for hedgehogs who feast on things that creep and crawl.

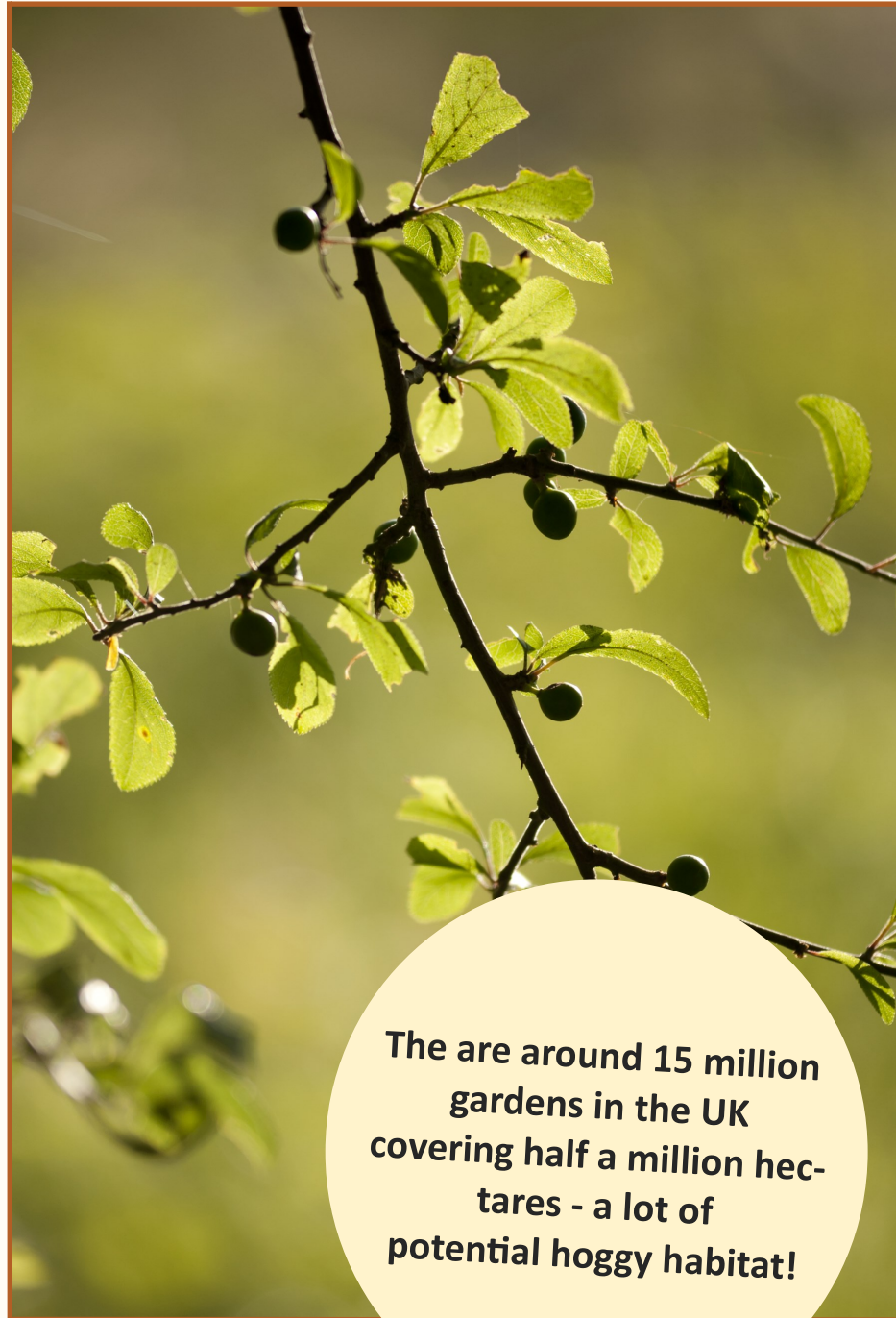
Why not let a corner of your garden go mad with native plants and grasses like meadow foxtail, knapweed and ox-eye daisy? Pollinating insects will also benefit, so what's not to love?

As well as acting like a hedgehog buffet, tussocky patches make perfect daytime nesting areas for hogs. You could even use branches to add some structure and create little highways through the undergrowth.

Go chemical-free

Hedgehogs are natural pest controllers and eat many of the critters you might want to see less of in your garden. Ditching slug pellets means more slugs, which means more hedgehog food!

While you're at it, why not put down the weedkiller too? Using it on your lawn drastically reduces the availability of earthworms, one of a hedgehog's favourite delicacies.



The are around 15 million gardens in the UK covering half a million hectares - a lot of potential hoggy habitat!

Invite a hog to dinner

Grow native plants

Did you know that caterpillars are one of the hedgehog's favourite foods? Second-only to beetles, according to the last large study into hedgehog diets!

Moth caterpillars are especially easy to access as many species head down to the ground to pupate, making them (and the pupae) easy pickings for hungry hedgies.

You can encourage moths to lay eggs in your garden by planting a mix of native plants such as honeysuckle, dog rose, hawthorn and blackthorn, which the caterpillars feed on.

Hedgehogs need to weigh between 500g and 700g to survive the winter

Offer supplementary food

Hedgehogs sometimes need a helping hand and will always appreciate a back-up food supply, especially as you never really know what the weather is going

to do these days!

Very dry periods can make natural foods like earthworms much harder to get hold of, while mild winters can wake some hogs up from hibernation only for them to find there are few insects about.

The best supplementary foods to leave out in your garden are specially-formulated hedgehog food, [like Spike's Hedgehog Food](#), or meat-based cat or kitten food (no fish flavours).

Please avoid feeding hedgehogs bread and milk as this can make them poorly. Fresh water is the only thing you should give hedgehogs to drink.



Do your safety checks

Check for hoggy visitors

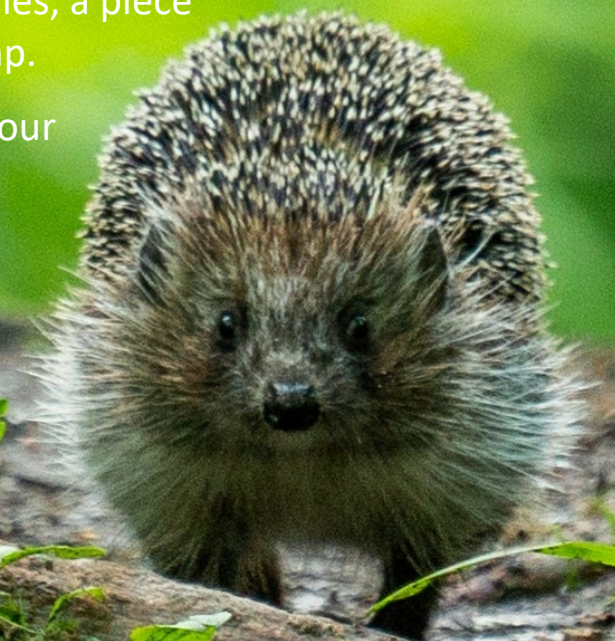
Long grass, wood-piles and leaf-mounds are irresistible for tired hogs and mums-to-be, so always make sure you check them for hedgies before doing work in the garden. Mowers and strimmers are one of the main causes of hedgehog injuries, causing horrific, often fatal damage, so carefully comb your garden for spiky visitors before seeing to your grass.

Then there are bonfires. Guy Fawkes Night falls right at the start of hedgehog hibernation season, when many are tucked up in the wood-piles we're planning on setting alight. The best way to get around this is to build a bonfire immediately before burning it, but always check it before lighting, regardless of when it was built.

Make your pond safe

Just like us, hedgehogs need to stay hydrated, and some of their favourite watering holes are lovely refreshing ponds. The only problem is that though hedgehogs are accomplished swimmers, if they fall into a pond with steep sides they can't climb out again and will drown. Luckily there's a simple solution for all pond owners: use a pile of stones, a piece of wood or some chicken wire to create a ramp.

Even if you don't have a pond you can leave your local hogs a revitalising drink of water in a shallow bowl.



Give a hog a home



Provide nesting places

Hedgehogs need cosy places to rest and nest, and you don't even need a purpose-built hedgehog house to provide one.

Why not go natural and create a log-pile?

As well as offering a sheltered spot for local hogs to sleep and start a family, the humble log-pile serves a dual purpose as hedgehog buffet, encouraging insects to take shelter inside.

However you decide to give a hog a home, make sure you don't clear all the fallen leaves from your garden. They make great hoggy nesting material!

Make a hedgehog hole

Did you know these pint-sized mammals can roam an average distance of 2km in a single night to feed? Male hedgehogs can even cover up to 3km a night in search of females during breeding season!

Hedgehogs can't take these midnight strolls if their route is blocked by impenetrable walls and fences that constrict their habitat, so why not give them a helping hand by creating a hedgehog hole? It only needs to be around 13cm x 13cm (the size of a CD). If you aren't able to do this you could make a small tunnel underneath, but either way, check with your adjoining neighbour before making any holes.

Get your neighbours involved

While one garden can make life that little bit easier for hedgehogs, it can't help them in isolation. The best way to make a big difference is to inspire your whole neighbourhood to become more hedgehog-friendly. A whole hedgehog street is like a mini nature reserve for these wonderful animals, working together to link up areas of previously disconnected green space with things like gardens, giving wildlife more room to roam.

By working together, we can make a difference and give our hedgehogs the Wilder Future they deserve.

Help hogs across the country

Support hedgehog causes

There's so much you can do to help hedgehogs in your garden, but there are also things you can do to improve the fortunes of hogs right across the UK. Lots of



charitable organisations are working on the ground to make wild places more hedgehog-friendly, protect the invertebrates that hedgehogs eat, and educate people about how they can take action for these iconic mammals. By supporting these charities through membership or donations you're directly helping them to continue this vital work.

Here are just some of the charities and organisations working to boost hedgehog numbers. They also offer advice about how to help your local hogs.

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside

That's us! An independent charity saving wildlife and wild places from destruction, increasing people's

awareness and understanding of the natural world and deepening their relationship with it.

The British Hedgehog Preservation Society offers help and advice to those with sick, injured or orphaned hedgehogs and keeps a list of UK rehabilitators.

People's Trust for Endangered Species is working to bring our most threatened species back from the brink.

Hedgehog Street campaigns for whole neighbourhoods to create hedgehog highways and, as a result, increase hog habitat.



Bringing the wild back to life

Show wildlife what it means to you

Have you noticed fewer hedgehogs where you live?

Pesticides, herbicides and slug pellets mean there are fewer insects and invertebrates for hedgehogs to eat. Hogs' feeding and roaming grounds are being fragmented, hemmed in and isolated by roads, building developments, fences and walls, while more gardens are concreted or decked over. Potential nesting and hibernation sites are being removed by over-tidy management, while intensive agriculture has created larger, more exposed fields that leave hedgehogs vulnerable to predators and give them fewer places to find food.

We're working tirelessly with local landowners and local communities to help turn the fortunes of hedgehogs and other wildlife around. We want pesticides to be phased out, we want to see farming and nature working in harmony and we believe that wilder gardens and urban areas are better for both wildlife and people. You can help us make this a reality. Become a member today and help us continue fighting for our precious wildlife and wild places.

———— www.lancswt.org.uk ————



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