

BS3 Hedgehog Project: Hedgehog Houses

Hedgehogs usually build their nests under shrubs, log piles, sheds or compost heaps but you can also give them a helping hand by making a hog house, providing safety and shelter!

Hedgehogs mostly like to live alone so competition for good nesting spots can be high. In summer hedgehogs often have multiple lighter nests and frequently change residence but in Autumn they start building one stronger and warmer hibernation nest (hibernacula) to last the entire winter.


Tips on building a hog house:

- Create a tunnel/porch or internal dividers to prevent other animals (such as foxes, badgers, dogs and cats) getting inside.
- Hedgehogs like their houses to be snug – don't go too big!
- Avoid treated or painted wood – they have sensitive noses!
- You can re-purpose household items such as wooden crates or old plastic storage tubs!
- Make a ventilation hole/pipe.
- Raise off ground slightly (e.g. on bricks) to prevent water pooling in the base.
- Line the base with dry leaves or cardboard to insulate and soak up liquids.
- Offer some nesting material (dry leaves or hay) in a pile outside– if it gets dragged in then you know you have a resident!
- Place in a quiet and sheltered part of your garden, along a boundary, under a shrub or behind a shed, where they won't get disturbed regularly.
- Place out of direct sunlight and with the entrance not exposed to prevailing winds.
- Cover it with leaves, twigs, garden material or soil.
- Do not disturb – as tempting as it is to look inside – they don't like to be bothered and will most likely move on if they feel the nest is threatened. Or worse, if a female with hoglets has taken residence she could abandon them.
- Do not put food inside the hog house – if you want to support feed, a separate feeding station can be made for this.
- Have patience – it can take them a while to find your hog house!
- Clean out every 1-2 years – do this in March/April when the hogs have finished hibernating and there is no chance of hoglets. Don't use any chemicals to clean. Never clean out in breeding season in case there is a nesting mother with hoglets.

DIY Guides/Designs

<https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/hedgehog-homes/>

people's
trust for
endangered
species




British Hedgehog
Preservation Society

Any straw or dry leaves left outside will likely be taken in and used for bedding.

The simple DIY Hedgehog House

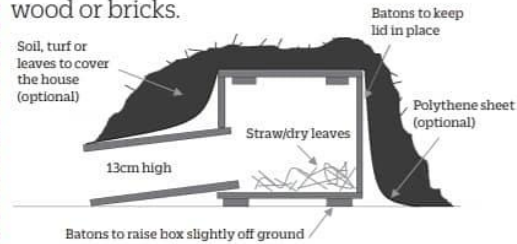
Take a spare plastic storage box, planter or milk crate (make sure it has holes) and flip it upside down. Make an entrance that's 13cm x 13cm and provide some bedding like dry leaves or pet straw. You can cover the rest of the box with some plastic sheeting and then cover with leaves/soil/grass cuttings.



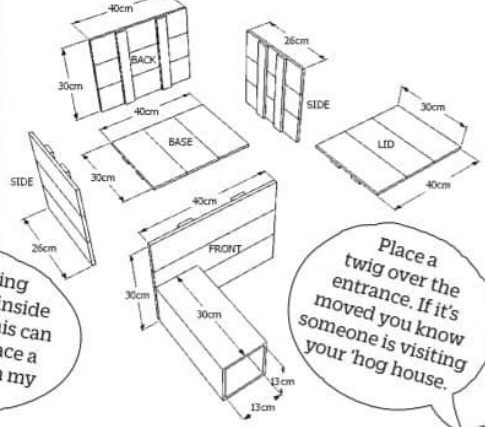
Houses are best placed in sheltered locations, along boundaries, in back gardens and within 5m of the house. The presence of pets or predators doesn't appear to put off a local hedgehog from moving in.

The tricky DIY Hedgehog House

Hedgehogs seem to love home-made houses made from untreated wood (ideally durable UK softwood species like larch, Douglas fir and red cedar). Don't nail the roof down (so that you can clean inside) and avoid using paint. Tunnels help stop predators or cats getting into the house and can be made of wood or bricks.




Labels in diagram: Soil, turf or leaves to cover the house (optional); Batons to keep lid in place; Polythene sheet (optional); Straw/dry leaves; 13cm high; Batons to raise box slightly off ground.



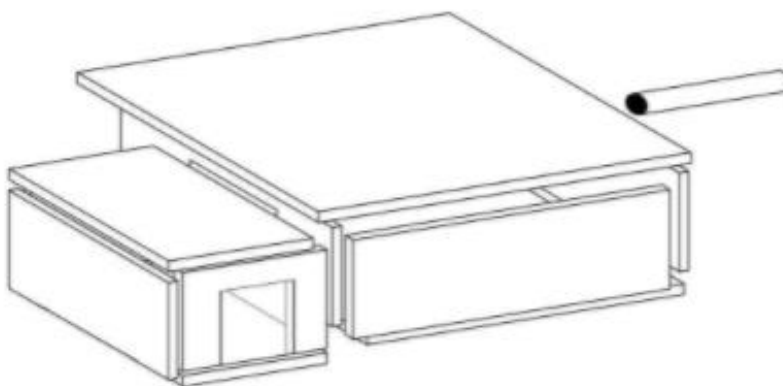
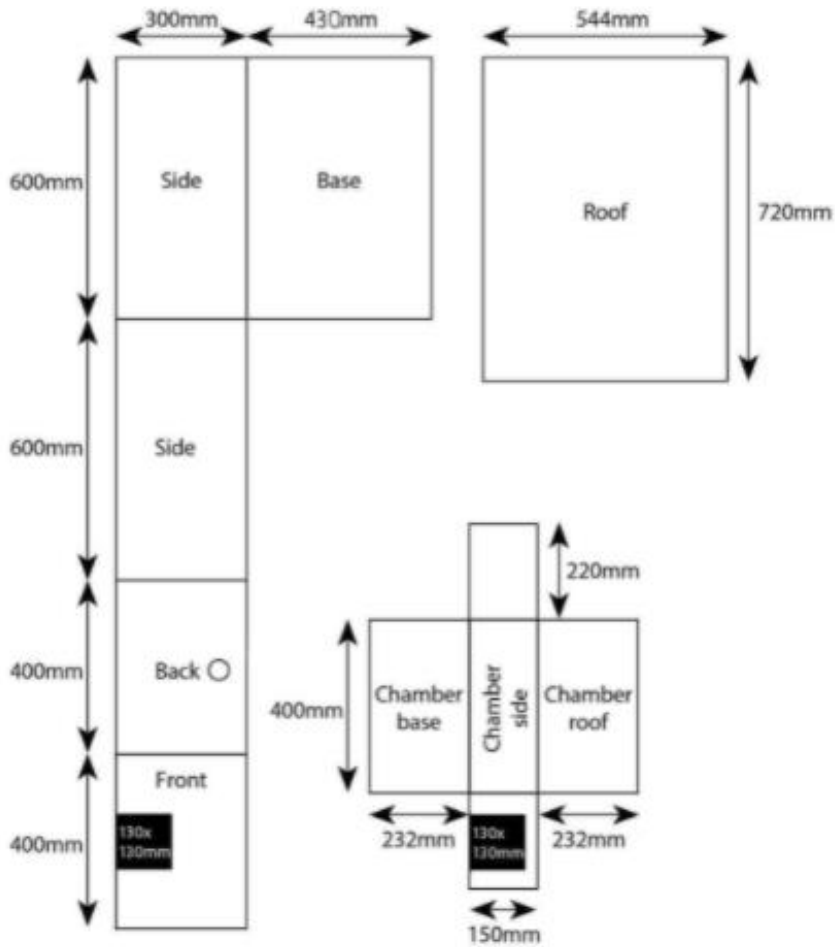
Avoid putting food or water inside the house, as this can disturb me, place a little away from my house.

Place a twig over the entrance. If it's moved you know someone is visiting your 'hog house.



<https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/homes-for-hedgehogs/>

Hedgehog house plans step-by-step



Give a 'hog a home

people's trust for endangered species

Hedgehogs make hibernation nests in winter called 'hibernacula' – these can be under hedgerows, fallen logs or in areas of scrub like bramble. They are durable, insulated and help maintain humidity to prevent dehydration for the sleeping 'hog. They also make simpler day time nests for resting, sleeping, breeding and rearing young in over summer.

Your garden can provide lots of great nesting spots - under your shed, in compost heaps, shrubs, under leaf piles or under logs or spare building materials. But, sometimes hedgehogs need a helping hand. You can buy pre-built hedgehog houses online or in stores, or have a go at making your own – homemade houses tend to be more popular with our prickly visitors.

Any straw or dry leaves left outside will likely be taken in and used for bedding.

The simple DIY Hedgehog House

Take a spare plastic storage box, planter or milk crate (make sure it has holes) and flip it upside down. Make an entrance that's 13cm x 13cm and provide some bedding like dry leaves or pet straw. You can cover the rest of the box with some plastic sheeting and then cover with leaves/soil/grass cuttings.



The tricky DIY Hedgehog House

Hedgehogs seem to love home-made houses made from untreated wood (ideally durable UK softwood species like larch, Douglas fir and red cedar). Don't nail the roof down (so that you can clean inside) and avoid using paint. Tunnels help stop predators or cats getting into the house and can be made of wood or bricks.



Houses are best placed in sheltered locations, along boundaries, in back gardens and within 5m of the house. The presence of pets or predators doesn't appear to put off a local hedgehog from moving in.

Click here for video instructions

It's best to clean my house in March/April when I've finished hibernating and before the breeding season as disturbing a mother can cause her to abandon her hoglets.

Avoid putting food or water inside the house, as this can disturb me, place a little away from my house.

Place a twig over the entrance. If it's someone you know someone is visiting your 'hog house.

Make a deluxe hedgehog house

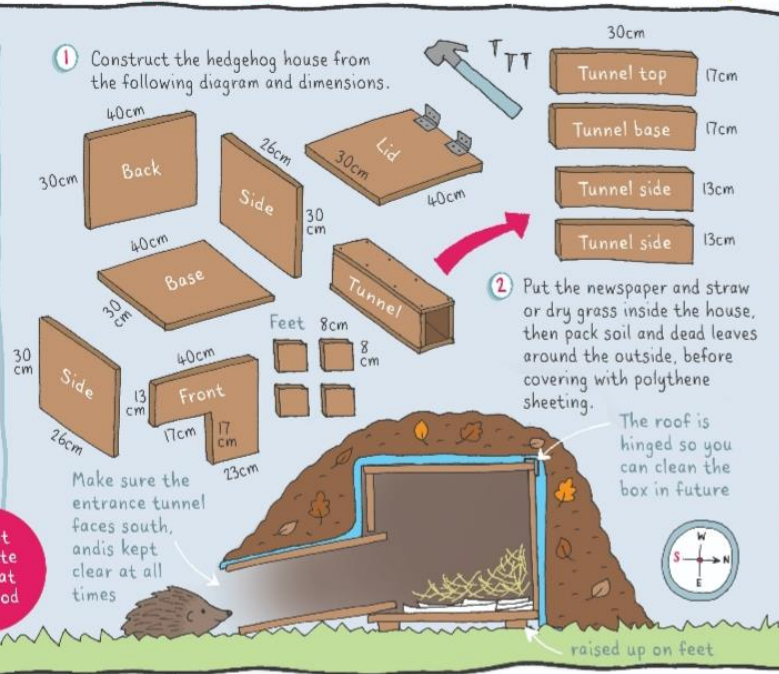
Wild About Gardens

You will need

- 20mm FSC plywood boards cut to the sizes shown
- Hammer and nails
- 2 metal hinges
- Soil
- Dry leaves
- Straw or dry grass
- Newspapers
- Polythene sheeting

Do not creosote or treat the wood

1 Construct the hedgehog house from the following diagram and dimensions.



2 Put the newspaper and straw or dry grass inside the house, then pack soil and dead leaves around the outside, before covering with polythene sheeting.

The roof is hinged so you can clean the box in future

raised up on feet

© Corinne Welch, 2015

www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk

Produced in collaboration with Hedgehog Street

BS3 Hedgehog Champion Houses - Hall of Fame!





