BADDELEY GREEN HEDGEHOG RESCUE ENCLOSURE GUIDE 2023

A Big Thank You

Thank you for choosing to take care of our rescued hedgehogs! Whilst you are feeding, cleaning, and building up your hedgehog's size and strength, we will be using the free space at the rescue to take care of the hedgehogs who need treatment and medication.

Without you we wouldn't be able to help as many hedgehogs as we do; we hope you find everything in this guide useful.

If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Facebook support group, Robyn or Clare at the rescue.

Clare is the founder of Baddeley Green Hedgehog Rescue and works tirelessly to ensure every hog receives the best treatment and gets the best chance at life. Already, so many hedgehogs have been rehabilitated and without the work of this wonderful rescue this wouldn't have been possible.

What you will find in this guide

This guide will aid you in each stage of hedgehog rehabilitation. With information on keeping hedgehogs safe and secure in your garden, handling your hedgehogs, what to feed them, and what to do when performing visual health checks on your hedgehog, follow this guide page by page to make sure you are hedgehog ready and use it to refer back to information once you are in care of a hedgehog or two...or three!

Equipment You Will Need - Find out a little more about your hog and equipment you will need before fostering.

Weighing Your Hedgehog - How to best weigh your hedgehog, and the equipment you'll need to do this.

Setting Up Your Enclosure - Find out how to prepare for the arrival of your foster hedgehog, and what materials to use.

Visual Health Check - How to perform visual health checks and track your hedgehog's progress.

DID YOU KNOW?

For nocturnal animals, hedgehogs have very poor eyesight. They rely on their sense of smell and hearing to get around. A hedgehog's primary diet includes beetles, earwigs, worms, and millipedes. They will eat slugs and snails if they have a low food source, but these can cause illness if consumed heavily.

Contrary to popular belief, hedgehogs shouldn't eat mealworms as they cause metabolic bone disease that is painful and is fatal for most hedgehogs.

WHY DO WE KEEP HEDGEHOGS IN ENCLOSED GARDENS?

An enclosed garden provides the hedgehogs with a chance to build up muscle mass, as well as providing us with a chance to monitor progress or treat any illnesses. A healthy hog has a much higher chance of survival in the wild. An enclosed garden is perfect as it allows them to roam around a large area, in an environment that is natural to them, allowing them to carry out all of their natural behaviors' under close supervision. We will always look to release them back into the wild if we feel they have a chance of surviving.

BEFORE FOSTERING, YOUR HEDGEHOG WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING...

- A medium or large sized rabbit carrier to collect your hedgehog in. Be sure to put bedding of some sort inside (Soft, dust extracted Straw/Hay—not chopped)
- A suitable hedgehog house.
- A cat proof feed station—big enough for two hedgehogs at one time. See below.
- A safe environment with plenty of natural foraging space.
- Dried out leaves for natural nesting material if possible.







- Wet cat food and dry kitten biscuits. You can also buy hedgehog biscuits such as Brambles or Spikes.
- Cat food in jelly is preferred most, only a few hedgehogs will eat cat food in gravy. Wet food is risky during the warmer months due to flies, and must be put down as late as possible, or avoided so the flies don't come into contact with fly egg infested food.
- Please note kitten biscuits need to have a high protein content where the first ingredient listed is meat based. Please ask Robyn or another weight gainer supervisor for more information.
- Pet safe disinfectant (e.g. 'Safe4')
- Gardening gloves for handling.

SETTING UP YOUR ENCLOSURE

1. Provide at least one hedgehog house that is slightly raised and in an area of the garden that is sheltered from harsh weathers.
2. Place an up turned plant pot or small storage container close by and add additional bedding to allow natural nest building
3. Feel free to leave a small area of the garden to become overgrown/ untouched to allow and encourage foraging and nest building. This is not essential but would be a great support.
4. Avoid using any harsh chemicals in the garden at ALL times.
5. Set the feed station a few feet away from the hedgehog house. See tips below on types of feed stations and ways to prevent cats getting in.
6. If you have any high steps or a wildlife pond these will need to be made hedgehog friendly. Robyn will advise on this when she visits your garden.

Additional Tips...

You can buy or build suitable hedgehog houses. It must be made of solid wood with a partition at the front as shown in the image. The entrance and tunnel must be around 5-6inches height and width. If it is to be treated please check the solution is non-toxic to animals.



When choosing what bedding to use for your house, please try to **avoid meadow hay or straw**.
Hedgehogs struggle to make their nests using this. Instead stick to dust extracted straw and thoroughly dried leaves from the garden.

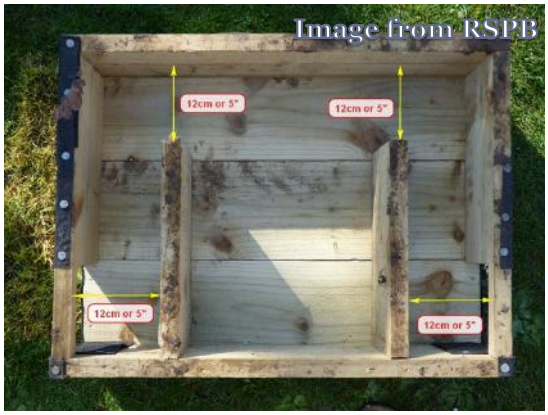
YOUR HEDGEHOG FEED STATION

Some hedgehogs (particularly males) can become dominant over their resources and will bully the more vulnerable hedgehogs. Because of this it is important to have a feed station that has plenty of space, with an entrance AND an exit. It is also handy for the feed station to be 'cat proof'. This is no easy task and may take a few attempts to make it completely cat proof . The below images are just examples of homemade feed stations, it is also possible to make them out of bricks. Google is a great platform to find ideas that suit everyone's capabilities in making/ buying a suitable feed station.

Depending on the size of your enclosed garden and the number of hedgehogs you have it may be beneficial to have two feed stations at either end of the garden.

The entrances/exits should be around 5-6 inches in height and width to allow hedgehogs of all sizes to get in.





WHEN AND WHAT TO FEED YOUR HEDGEHOG(S)

Feed your hedgehogs once a day using both wet and dry food (unless you have been advised otherwise from the rescue). Hedgehogs have quick metabolisms and will forage all night for food, so will most likely visit the feeding station multiple times throughout an evening.

Feeding your hedgehog in the evening will be better as this is when they are most active.

Always provide fresh water each evening, hedgehogs can drink a lot of water. Be sure to clean all food and water bowls regularly to avoid fly-strike/build up of bad bacteria/parasites.

If all of the food is being eaten then we advise providing more food the following night. Scattering dry food in different areas of the garden is also a great way to encourage natural foraging behaviours and will keep the hedgehog busy at night. Only do this is the hedgehog doesn't visit the feed station after a couple of nights.

During the warmer nights we advise putting wet food down as late and physically possible and removing left over food in the morning, or avoid using completely if possible due to the high risk of fly strike (see image).

Feeding the right food to your hedgehogs is very important. Not all cat food or kitten food is suitable. Most wet cat food in jelly is suitable, however wet food in gravy is disliked most of the time so we would recommend avoiding this.

Dry kitten food is the most common form of food we offer the hedgehogs, as do most other rescuers. The most suitable have a high protein content and low wheat content. It is also important to know that hedgehogs cannot have diary products and so kitten food containing milk is a big no no!

See the image on page 6 for suggestions of hedgehog rescue approved dry food. We recommend mixing a few types together, for example Purina Kitten, Sainsburys own brand and Brambles hedgehog biscuits, as hedgehogs can be a little picky at times.

Contrary to belief hedgehogs eat very small amount of slugs and snails and a high consumption of these can cause illness. See chart on page 6 for more info. You can encourage beetles and caterpillars in the garden by leaving small piles of wood and small stones as natural bug hotels and by leaving areas of the garden to become 'wild' or slightly overgrown.



Fly eggs found on uneaten food ^

SUITABLE BOWLS FOR WATER AND FOOD

As hedgehogs are forages and ground feeders, they will struggle to eat and drink from very deep bowls. Please see images below for guidance and if you are unsure of anything feel free to reach out to Robyn or another weight gainer supervisor.

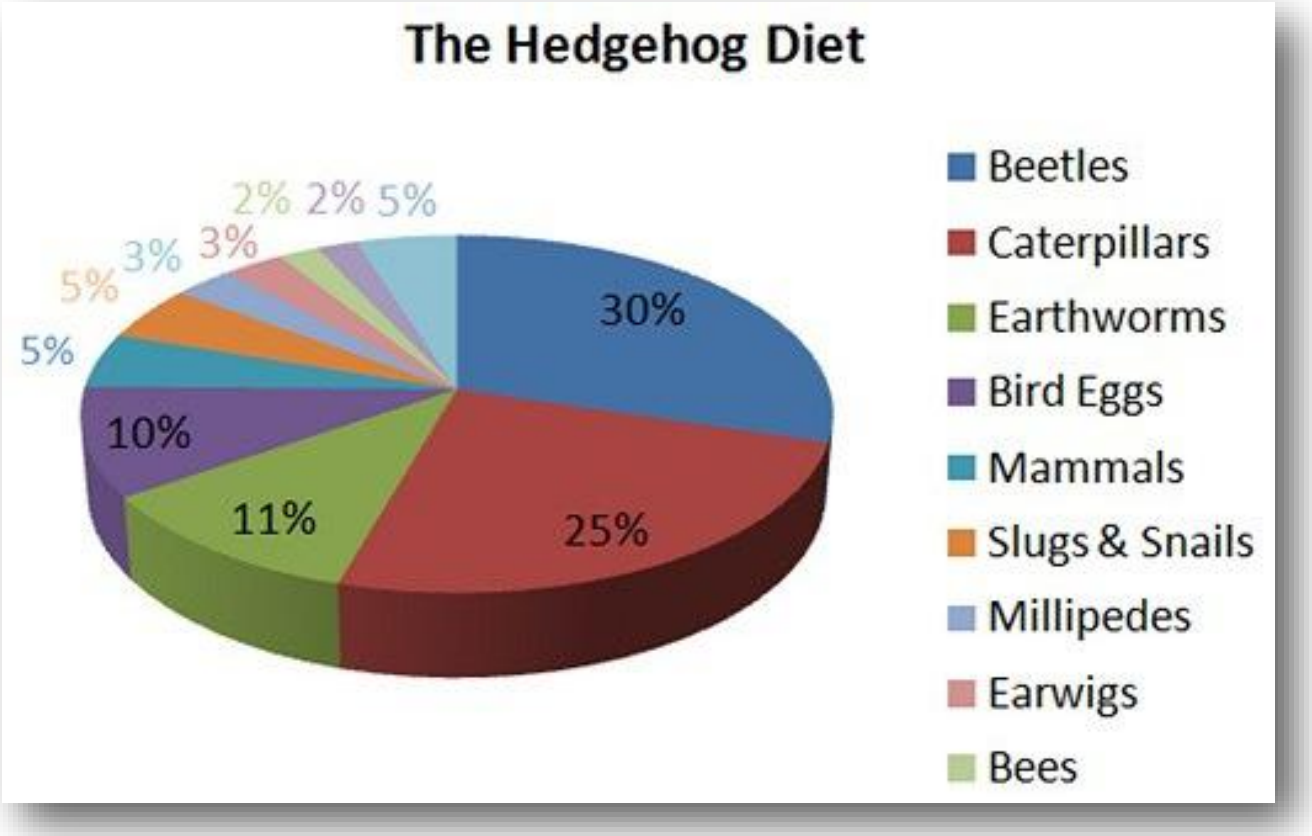




SUITABLE SUPPORT FEED AND THE EUROPEAN HEDGEHOGS DIET



PLEASE NOTE! if you are looking to purchase a food that is not mentioned above please run it past Robyn first to check it's nutritional value and is suitable for hedgehogs.



HEDGEHOG FRIENDLY GARDENING

Our gardens can be a vital resource for hedgehogs, with surveys revealing that urban hedgehogs are faring better than their rural counterparts. This means we can help vulnerable hedgehogs on our own doorstep with small, simple garden changes.

Log pile

One of the best features for many wildlife, especially the hedgehogs. Log piles can provide a safe, secure site for breeding or hibernating. They also attract insects providing a year round food supply for hedgehogs.

Collect any old dead wood from your garden or ask the local park or wildlife reserve for permission to take some from their supply and pile it up in a quiet undisturbed corner of your garden. The bigger you can make it the better. As the wood rots down, replenish the logs from time to time.

Leaf piles

Not only can leaf piles be used as a potential nesting site but they can also be used for bedding material for any other nest sites or hedgehog boxes in the surrounding area.



Please be careful when tidying leaf piles as there may be a hog in residence!

Overgrown 'wild' corner

Most gardeners have a big tidy once or twice a year, often in spring or at the end of the growing season. This can remove nesting or hibernation sites for hedgehogs, and reduces the amount of insects in the garden. Grasshoppers, for example, need standing vegetation in which to overwinter in. Pick a corner of your garden and leave it to go a bit mad – it can have native or non-native planting. The key is just to leave it untrimmed and undisturbed. Embrace the wild!

Wildflower patch

If you fancy taking your commitment to wildlife to the next level, creating diverse semi-natural grasslands is it. There are lots of options, from annual mixes composed of colourful plants like poppies and cornflowers, to subtle and beautiful perennial displays. Base your seed selection on soil type, and go for a reputable seed trader that specialises in native plants
(e.g. Emorsgate, Landlife or Habitat Aid). Go for a mix without grass seed as grasses will naturally appear in time on any plot. And no fertilizer!

Pond

Under appreciated as a hedgehog-friendly feature, every garden should have one. Hedgehogs will benefit from having a year-round water supply, and they with thrive on the added insects that it will attract. Hedgehogs are excellent swimmers, just make sure there is a gently



WEIGHING YOUR HEDGEHOG

You will be advised on how often to weigh your hedgehog, but typically this is done every few days or once a week depending on the hedgehogs age, current health and activity status during winter months. Once your support group is happy your hog is gaining or maintaining a healthy weight, you may only need to weigh your hedgehog every couple of weeks. You will need to weigh your hedgehog on your scales on the day you collect them as different scales have a weight variance.

- Carefully pick up the hedgehog (using gardening gloves if required).
- Gently place the hedgehog onto the scales. They should sit still long enough for this but if they are a bit wriggly you can use a larger box on your scales to place the hedgehog into. Ensure you 'zero' the weight of the box/bowl before weighing.
- Record the number shown on the scales (in grams).
- You will be asked to post a picture of your hedgehog on the scales onto the weight gainers group so remember to take your phone.
- It is normal for a hedgehog's weight to fluctuate slightly especially within the first couple of days. However, if your hedgehogs has lost weight your supervisor will advise on any adjustments needed. This could be an easy fix such as increasing their feed.

Keep handling to a minimum; they are wild animals and can become stressed very easily. Do not let your pets or young children near the hedgehog.

Ensure you use a disinfectant spray that is safe to use around animals when cleaning your weighing scales.



CARRYING OUT VISUAL HEALTH CHECKS

When you are handling your hedgehog for weight checks, you can take this opportunity to look for signs of ill health. Hedgehogs have a personality of their own, depending on how long you have had your hog, you may notice some of their traits and should therefore recognise what is 'normal' for them.

If you have any concerns over your hedgehog's health, please contact your support group or Clare at the rescue if you have not heard from the support group.

Progress checker...

To keep on top of weight changes, it might be a good idea to keep a log. Whether the log be on your computer, written down, or on a chart somewhere, it is always helpful to refer to. Tables can be used to track weight, to show how many times the hedgehog has been weighed or what food has been more popular amongst your visitors. It may also be a good idea to have a box labelled 'health check' to write down any comments you feel are important regarding your hedgehog's health.

Below is an example table, however, feel free to adapt the headings to suit you and your hog.

Date	Name	M/F	Weight (g)	Health Check Notes

Things to look out for during a visual health check...

Be gentle when handling your hedgehog. It is important to reduce stress levels as much as possible. Do not over handle your hog.

- Your hedgehog's eyes should be bright and clean.
- The nose, ears, and mouth should be free of discharge.
- Ensure the skin is clean and clear of parasites (e.g. ticks, fleas).
- Listen to their breathing. It should sound clear. It shouldn't sound wheezy, crackly, or laboured.
- Check to see that spines are not broken or falling out in large quantities. It is normal for hedgehogs to lose the occasional spike as they grow.
- Your hedgehog should be eating and drinking easily without difficulty.
- Faeces should be dark brown or black. If it is off colour, either green or a slimy consistency please contact your support group or Clare at the rescue.
- Your hog should react to noises and curl into a ball. If it doesn't and appears lethargic or displaying flat spines, contact your support group or Clare at the rescue.
- Finally, remove your gloves and feel the hedgehogs belly. It should feel warm! If it feels cold then bring the hedgehog into the house, with a warm bottle close by and contact Robyn or Clare ASAP.

AN EVEN CLOSER LOOK...

For many of those already housing a hedgehog, the temptation to know what they get up to at night is all too much. If you're interested in knowing a little more about your hog, you might be interested in sourcing a camera. There are a variety of brands available, and these can vary in price. A good starting camera can be found online, or if you know someone who already owns one, this might be a good chance to borrow the camera before purchasing one for yourself. A good camera will usually cost around £40 - £50. Blink and Ring cameras are a fond favourite amongst the hedgehog community.

Camera Set Up...

Setting up your trail cam will allow you to get sneak peek at how your hog lives. Before capturing their movements, here are a few things to consider when using your camera.

- It is handy having cameras at ground level so that you are able to monitor movement and eating closely. Cameras are very easily knocked over so look at securing the camera in place.
- On some cameras there are options to send a live feed from the camera to your phone or other devices - check to see what cameras offer this function if this is something you are interested in. It is also handy to consider the distance from your Wi-Fi router to the camera as this effects the camera performance.
- Trail and security cameras use infra-red low glow black LEDs so that the camera has no need for flash photography. Always remember when taking photos or videos of your hedgehog to turn the flash setting off to avoid causing unnecessary stress to your hedgehog.

For more information contact Robyn Carpenter or ask on the Weight Gainers Facebook Group.





TAKING HOLIDAYS

We want nothing more than for people to be able to enjoy their time off and wind down. Life is busy after all! If you do have any holidays planned during a time when you have hedgehogs then we ask that you complete a holiday form at least two weeks before you go. The holiday form can be found in the files on the Facebook group.

We are happy for a neighbor, friend or family member to care for the hedgehogs whilst you are away but they must first speak to a weight gainer supervisor to be given all the information they need. For example if the hedgehog is safe to hibernate and who to contact if they are worried. We ask that the carer for the hogs are given written instruction on feeding regime and anything else they need to know including when and how to weigh the hedgehogs and who to pass this information onto. We recommend they come round and do the weighing and feeding a few times before you go away so they have understanding and confidence.

Next of Kin ...

Whilst we hope there is never a situation where you become ill or physically unable to help us at Baddeley Green Hedgehog Rescue, it is important that the senior rescue team are provided with your next of kin information should this happen. This is so we can ensure that any hedgehogs in your care are safe at all times. We will contact your next of kin should we be unable to reach you for what we feel is a considerable length of time. The next of kin form can be found in the files on the Facebook group.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

If at any point throughout caring for any amount of hedgehog for any period of time you become concerned about their progress or you identify any problems, please get in touch with Clare or Robyn at the rescue or speak to a member of on the Weight Gainers Facebook group.

The groups are there for additional support and for you to interact with others housing hogs for weight gaining. It is always lovely to see volunteers posting updates about their hedgehogs so be sure to get involved on social media and ask plenty of questions, as well as raise awareness of all the wonderful work Clare does.

Please do not delay in contacting someone for help. To provide the best treatment to the hogs, it is important any illnesses are caught quickly.

Facebook Groups - Baddeley Green Hedgehog Rescue & Baddeley Green Weight Gainers

Clare Simmons - 07917 161491

Robyn Carpenter - 077732 79831