



# Hedgehog Rescue NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021



## MESSAGE FROM YVONNE

As i write this it is a year to the day that we were in our first lockdown. It's been an eventful year for the hospital, having to send volunteers home, then reopening and forming bubbles which we still work in now. From January to March we usually take in around 10 hogs, but this year it has been 52! My guess are the milder winters and people spending more time at home, so notice hedgehogs in distress.

Spring is finally here! The flowers are beginning to blossom, the nights are getting longer, the days warmer and our prickly little friends are beginning to visit us again. This is a great time to check and clean your hedgehog house and put out water and food, as they will be very thirsty and hungry after hibernation. If you have a problem feeding due to cats and foxes then creating a feeding station could be the solution. Another lockdown project.

We have recently had a case of slug pellet poisoning in one of our hedgehogs. We are working extremely hard to reverse the effects but as time goes on we may have to make the painful decision to put her to sleep. Slug pellets contain the chemical Metaldehyde which attack the nervous system, rendering the hog unable to stand or walk. In this newsletter we have written about some effective natural slug deterrents for your bedding plants and vegetables. Let's try and keep our gardens as safe havens for all our wild neighbours!



## STAGE TWO IS COMPLETE!

Returning to the hedgehog hospital in February, Richard was able to finish putting in the new cages!

Our volunteer Jason came and secured the longer worktop onto the island giving us more space to work - perfect for social distancing. We even have a new cabinet for the micro-scope, which means Yvonne can analyse samples alongside the busy volunteers in the hospital.

Lastly, new doors for the kitchen cabinets tie in with the new cages, making them easier to clean and sanitise after use.

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in all the refurbishments, it's been a real team effort!



**TESCO**  
TESCO COMMUNITY GRANTS

Hedgehog Rescue has recently been awarded an huge £1000 by the Blue Token Appeal at Tesco.

We're so thankful for this generous donation as it will ensure Yvonne and all the volunteers can continue caring for the large number of rescued hogs recuperating in the hospital.



## RISE AND SHINE

Since March hedgehogs have been emerging from their winter hibernation. Most of them will have been asleep since November and lost a third of their body weight, making food and water the only things on their mind for the next few weeks.

Hedgehog physiological changes during hibernation:

- Heart rate slows to ten beats per minute
- Body temperature drops to below 10 degrees from 35 degrees
- Brain activity almost completely shuts down except to monitor vital signs and threats.



All of these changes need to be reversed when they wake up, and it doesn't happen immediately or easily.

Hedgehogs are wobbly, extremely hungry and vulnerable to threats from predators and hazards like ponds or unpredictable weather.

The first thing hedgehogs look for is water, food comes second. They need to eat enough so they are healthy and ready for mating season. Females need to consume enough ensuring they can produce six to seven healthy hoglets in summer.

## LET'S GET WILD!

With increasing urbanisation threatening habitats and food sources, one of the best ways we can help hedgehogs is to create a wild patch or let our entire gardens grow as nature intended. Allowing wild flowers to bloom encourages insects like beetles, caterpillars and slugs into your garden.

As we begin to wave goodbye to winter, hedgehogs will be waking up from hibernation, hungry, thirsty and ready to breed in the coming weeks. The increase in insects during spring provides essential nutrition for these hungry hogs.

Are you worried that your garden is too small? There is always room for a corner of wild flowers and plants, no matter what size. Having a variety of native greenery will attract native insects and birds to your garden. Hedgehogs also act as a natural pest controller, so don't be alarmed by the thought of insects hovering around your plants.







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## ...WHERE TO START? GO WITH THE FLOW AND LET IT GROW

We're so concerned with mowing our perfect lawns that grass dotted with flowers is one of the rarest habitats in our gardens, yet it provides incredibly beneficial habitat for wildlife.

- Set aside some lawn and let nature take control. The less pristine the lawn, the more promising the wildlife, like birds, insects and small mammals.
- Mow in some paths, ensuring your garden still looks cared for (see picture below).

## BREATHE LIFE INTO BARE SOIL

Wildflowers flourish in unproductive soil so pick a patch that hasn't been cultivated yet and sow your choice of seeds.

- Digging and rotovating soil to control weeds will also bring less fertile soil to the surface
- Rake the ground creating a seedbed
- Do not add any fertilisers to the ground as this encourages the growth of grasses which will swamp the flowers
- Sow a mix of wild grass and flowers, and scatter the seeds evenly, lightly raking them into the soil and watering thoroughly



### Hedgehog friendly flowers:

One of the best plants you can have in your garden is Buddleia. These sweet smelling flowers attract hordes of butterflies and caterpillars, and caterpillars are a hedgehog delicacy.

- Meadow Patch or bedding plants: Scabious, Cornflower, Poppies and Columbine
- Plants providing shelter: St John's Wart, Salvia, Wallflowers, Geraniums and Catmint
- Good for insects: Sunflowers, Marigolds, Oxeye Daisy and Cosmos

**Do you have a story to tell about your experiences with hedgehogs, or about one of the hedgehogs you've been looking after for Hedgehog Rescue?**

If so, drop us an email...  
we always love to hear what our volunteers are doing to make lives better for hedgehogs!

We'd also love to see how you are transforming your gardens to help our prickly friends.  
Spring is a great time to get making your garden wildlife friendly.

Please send us your photos, and let us know what area you live in, so that we can feature you in our next newsletter.



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## MAKING YOUR GARDEN SAFE THIS SPRING

### Pest Control

The time has come to start sowing seeds for the summer harvest. However, alongside delicious fruit and vegetables, it also brings pests! Preventative measures such as putting down slugs pellets prevent your plants from being eaten, but they also kill hedgehogs who eat these poisoned slugs.

#### Alternatives to slug pellets:

- **EGG SHELLS** - when spread across the soil make it hard for slugs and snails to walk on
- **WOOD ASH** - works similar to eggs and is great for your soil
- **COFFEE GROUNDS** - don't throw away left over coffee grounds, spread them over your soil to deter pests
- **GROWING SLUG FRIENDLY PLANTS** - several plants attract slugs and snails and if you grow lettuce or lawn chamomile next to the plant you want to protect, the slugs and snails will go for these instead
- **INTRODUCE A PREDATOR** - hedgehogs, birds and frogs love to eat slugs, but not your plants



### Garden Waste

When taming our gardens we tend to pile up our garden rubbish and compost, which can provide enticing homes for hedgehogs. Take care to thoroughly check inside and underneath the pile before turning with a fork, throwing the garden waste out or creating a bonfire.

At Hedgehog Rescue we recently took in a hog who was sent to us from a recycling centre after being thrown out with garden waste. She sadly passed away, so it is vital that we remember to check and then check again!



### Ponds

Ponds are such an important habitat as they draw in huge varieties of species, and can provide benefits for creatures beyond your garden.

Although hedgehogs are strong swimmers, make sure you provide a way for them to exit the water safely. Use piled up stones, bricks and wood to create slopes or ramps helping the hedgehogs make their way out.

Provide shallow dishes of water for thirsty hogs and wildlife, to help avoid the chance of them falling into deeper water.

### Mowing the lawn

Strimmers and mowers can cause catastrophic injuries, so always thoroughly check the undergrowth before cutting. Initially only cut the top layer and then double check before you cut any lower, in case of any smaller animals hiding or nesting in the grass.

### Drains and netting

Hedgehogs are curious but have poor eyesight, so make sure any drains, holes or ditches in your garden are covered, to prevent them getting into trouble. When you're not using netting make sure to tidy it away as hedgehogs can easily become entangled and injured.

### Access

It sounds simple, but without any access hedgehogs won't be able to enjoy your newly wild garden. Hedgehogs walk long distances in search of food and a mate, so our gardens provide a network of habitats for these mammals to explore. Creating a hedgehog hole (13cm by 13cm) through a fence, gate or wall ensures they are able to roam freely and safely.



## VOLUNTEER MESSAGE

*When I moved into my new property on September 2019, the garden was bare, with only a few unhappy plants dotted around the lawn. Despite the its small size, we quickly filled the garden with a variety of plants, trees and a minnow pond, hoping to attract all kinds of wildlife.*

I was really hoping for was a visit from our spikey friends but I was convinced there weren't any hedgehogs living in my garden.

Eager to see a hedgehog I set up a trail camera one evening. Not expecting anything but a blank screen, I was ecstatic to see a little snuffling nose panning into view of the camera. A hedgehog! You would have thought I had just won the lottery by my reaction.

Roughly ten months on I now have three hedgehogs living in the garden and with many more passing through of an evening.

Feeding the hedgehogs allows me to keeps an eye on them and one evening in easter I noticed one had been brushed by a strimmer!

Thankfully she wasn't severely injured but I took her to Yvonne who kindly checked her over and removed a number of nasty ticks.

Speaking to my neighbours about what happened to this little hog, I am hoping they will be extra careful from now on.

Seeing this hedgehog with her shaved spines was a strong reminder of how challenging it is to be a hedgehog in an increasingly human environment.

I feel that anyone creating a wildlife garden is creating al little sanctuary and a glimmer of hope for the protection of our spikey friends!

Sarah



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Check out the latest updates about all our rescued hedgehogs and the Hedgehog Rescue team on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter







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## VOLUNTEERING DURING LOCKDOWN

We have just had our busiest January to March, which meant the volunteers were constantly lending a hand in the hospital.

Continuing to work in bubbles of two, we are now beginning to increase these to three as lockdown eases and the hospital continues to fill up. Many of us still haven't gotten used to wearing a mask and trying to look through steamed up glasses while we work!

Last year, seven hedgehogs who were looked after in the hospital were released into Wick. This year at least five of these hogs have been spotted still rummaging around in the wild! This is great news and shows that the hard work of our volunteers and Yvonne really does help this declining British species!

If you would like to volunteer with South Gloucester and Yate Hedgehog rescue, please get in touch with Yvonne via the email [hedgehogrescue@live.com](mailto:hedgehogrescue@live.com)

## Looking for a gift for an animal lover?

Adopt a hedgehog and support Hedgehog Rescue in the care of our prickly friends.

The recipient receives a small beanie hedgehog, a pin badge, a pen, and a key ring, along with an adoption certificate for just

**£25**

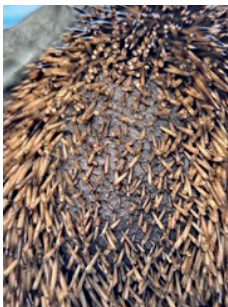


## HEDGEHOG RESCUE'S PATIENTS



### HOPE

This female hog came to us after she was injured by a strimmer. At this time of year we always have an influx of hogs with life threatening injuries due to people strimming their lawns without checking. Luckily, only this hog's spines had been shaved, so we have been monitoring her until she is strong enough to be released.



### BRIAN

This male hedgehog came to us with a severe case of ringworm which had resulted in him losing 50% of his spines.

After several weeks of treatment Brian's new spines are finally beginning to grow back.



### BRAMBOLINA

Brambolina came into Hedgehog Rescue in a very wobbly and dehydrated state; most likely after coming out of hibernation. She was given fluids and was wormed in the first few days. After ten days Brambolina was recently released back into the wild.

