

How to make a Hedgehog House

Difficulty level: Moderate

What it's for

Hedgehog houses are great for hibernation in the winter and nesting mothers in the spring and summer.

Hedgehogs are important as they eat other bugs that may damage plants and vegetables.

What you will need

- A sheet of wood or paving slab*
- Around 30 bricks (preferably the ones with holes in them)*
- Logs*
- Dry leaves, twigs and/or bark

* If you don't have enough bricks, logs, a sheet of wood or a paving slab, you can also use a plastic box (make sure to cut an entrance and plenty of breathing holes) and camouflage it in the same way as in step 6 below.

How to build it

1. Find a flat, quiet, shady spot, preferably next to a wall or fence.
2. Dig a hold around 7cm deep and 45cm wide, and add some leaves, twigs and/or bark for bedding.
3. Lay bricks around the edge of the hole, making sure to leave a gap for the entrance.
4. Lay another two layers of bricks on top of the first, overlapping them to create a stable structure. At the entrance, create a tunnel, using a couple of bricks laid across the gap for the tunnel roof.
5. Place a sheet of wood or paving slab on top of the house to create a roof. If you have a wooden roof, stack some logs on top to weigh it down.
6. Add further logs around the outside for camouflage (you could also add more leaves, twigs and bark) – they will also attract insects, which are an important part of a hedgehog's diet.

7. Put a couple of twigs across the entrance. It's best not to disturb the area once the house is built, but if the twigs have been moved, you will know your house is occupied!

How to clean it

Cleaning is important to avoid any ticks or parasites being passed on to another occupant.

Around April, check for any occupants by gently lifting the lid. If there is a hedgehog still there, quietly replace the lid and check back a few days later. Once the house is vacated, remove any old bedding, douse the inside with boiling water and add some new leaves, twigs and/or bark.

The house can then be used as a nest between May and September. By October, the hoglets and mother will likely have left. It is very important to be as quiet as possible when checking so as not to disturb a nesting female. Once vacated, the house should be cleaned again as above for hibernation.

