



Hedgehog Boxes

In the wild, hedgehogs build nests using natural materials such as dry leaves, grass and moss, typically in sheltered locations beneath hedgerows, dense vegetation, fallen logs or piles of branches.

Nest boxes can provide valuable shelter throughout the year and are used by hedgehogs in every season, not just during winter. During June and July, females may use them as maternity nests to raise their young. Throughout spring and summer, males and non-breeding females often use them as daytime resting places.

As temperatures begin to fall in autumn, hedgehogs start searching for a suitable hibernaculum, the nest where they will spend the winter months. Hibernation usually begins around November and continues until March or April, although the exact timing depends on weather conditions and food availability.

Installation Guidance

- ✓ Place the hedgehog box in a quiet, shady and sheltered part of the garden.
- ✓ Choose a dry location, such as against a wall, fence, hedge, shed or beneath dense vegetation.
- ✓ Make sure the entrance does not face north or north-east, as this helps avoid cold winter winds.
- ✓ Cover the house with dried leaves, twigs and other vegetation to help it blend in and provide extra insulation.
- ✓ Add a small amount of hay or dry leaves inside the house, so hedgehogs can use it to build their nest.
- ✓ Avoid placing the house in a busy area where people, pets or garden machinery may cause disturbance.
- ✓ Do not treat the house with creosote or non-water-based preservatives or paint, as fumes can remain and may be harmful. If using a water-based preservative, apply it to the outside only.

Hedgehogs will not usually eat and sleep in the same place, so do not place food inside the house, except perhaps briefly to encourage initial interest. Once a hedgehog is using the house, move food away from the entrance so predators or rival hedgehogs are not attracted to the nest site.

Maintenance

After winter use, usually in late March or early April, the house can be cleaned if you are sure it is unoccupied. Do not clean or move the house if a hedgehog is inside.

