

## Nature Watch 4 - Hedgehogs are amazing!



The hedgehog is Britain's only spiny mammal. Thousands of spines cover its entire body and these form its protection from predators when it curls up into a ball. They are nocturnal and, like many other nocturnal creatures, do not have good eyesight so rely on their senses of smell and hearing when they are trying to find food. Hedgehogs will feed on a wide range of things. The main part of their diet is made up of invertebrates (animals without a backbone) such as worms, beetles, slugs, caterpillars, earwigs and millipedes. But they are not fussy and will eat what they can to stay alive. Hedgehogs have been known to eat a wide range of other insects and even sometimes things like frogs, baby rodents, baby birds, birds' eggs and fallen fruit.

You may never have seen a hedgehog before (apart from Mrs Tiggy-Winkle of course) but it wasn't many years ago when they were a really common sight in gardens and in the general urban area we all live in.

# But



### **Hedgehogs are in trouble!**

We have lost about a third of our hedgehogs since the year 2000. They really need our help.

Fortunately, there are things we can do. Here are the top ten ways we can help hedgehogs survive...

## Top 10 tips to make your garden hedgehog-friendly

1. Link your garden with Hedgehog Highways
2. Make your pond safe with a ramp
3. Create a wild corner
4. Deal with netting and litter
5. Put out food and water
6. Stop using chemicals
7. Check before strimming
8. Be careful with bonfires
9. Make a home for hedgehogs
10. Become a Hedgehog Champion



Chemicals (for example in slug pellets) can have a devastating effect on hedgehogs and other wildlife. There are many other ways to deter slugs from our plants including watering with garlic! There is a helpful link here... <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/ideas-for-safe-slug-control/>

Slugs are actually very helpful in our garden. **Did you know** that there are more than 40 species of slug in the UK and only a small number of these actually eat our plants – the rest do an important job of helping to break down the soil so that our plants will be healthier! If we kill them all with pellets then our soil will be worse AND we may be poisoning hedgehogs, birds and other wildlife.

If you want to become a Hedgehog Champion then follow this link <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/about-our-hedgehog-street-campaign/>

You will find lots of helpful advice on how to make your garden (and street) more hedgehog-friendly as well as some amazing ideas for hedgehog shelters.

Have fun and stay safe.

