

SO HOW DOES LITTER HARM HEDGEHOGS?

Animals can get entangled in items like plastic rings, fishing line and packaging. Many species mistake plastic for food which can block their stomachs and make them very sick or even stop them from eating real food altogether.

In the UK, the scale of the problem is clear, with thousands of reports every year about animals harmed by litter, including birds, hedgehogs, foxes and marine life.

Here's a look at how litter affects hedgehogs:



Entanglement

Hedgehogs can get caught in plastic rings and bits of packaging. This can injure or trap them.



Getting stuck in containers

Empty cans, jars, and plastic cups can look like a cosy shelter or food source. But once inside, hedgehogs can become trapped and unable to escape.



Microplastics

Tiny pieces of litter can be accidentally eaten. This can block their digestive system or expose them to harmful chemicals.



Habitat damage

Litter pollutes and damages the natural spaces hedgehogs rely on for shelter, nesting and finding insects and worms to eat.



Increased risk from other hazards

Rubbish piles can attract predators or push hedgehogs into unsafe places like roads, where they're at much greater risk.

Did you know?

Hedgehog numbers in the UK have dropped by around 30–75% in rural areas since 2000. That's a huge decline for such an important animal.



Why it matters...

Hedgehogs help control pests by eating insects like slugs, beetles and caterpillars, which protects gardens and crops naturally. They play an important role in the food chain and support overall ecosystem balance. Their decline highlights wider environmental problems such as habitat loss and pollution.

Discover how you can protect hedgehogs on the next page...

HOW TO PROTECT A HEDGEHOG

Protecting hedgehogs starts with helping the places where they live.

Sadly, litter in parks, gardens and streets can be very dangerous for wildlife. Hedgehogs can get trapped in plastic, injured by sharp rubbish, or accidentally eat things that make them poorly. By picking up litter, making safe spaces and caring for nature, we can all become Hedgehog Helpers!

MAKE A HEDGEHOG HIGHWAY



Make a small hole (13cm x 13cm) in fences so hedgehogs can move between gardens.

FOOD & WATER



Put out a shallow bowl of fresh water every night. Offer hedgehog food or meaty cat/dog food.

BE CAREFUL



Check under cars before driving.

LITTER PICKING HELPS HEDGEHOGS



Go litter picking in your local area. Use a bag and grabber to keep your community and wildlife safe.

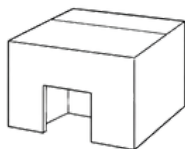
BUILD A HEDGEHOG HOUSE:

1. Choose a quiet place



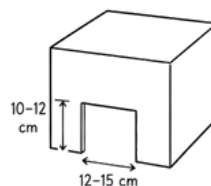
Choose a quiet place in your garden, under a hedge or near a fence.

2. Use a box



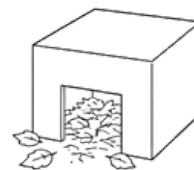
Find a sturdy box (like a wooden crate)

3. Make an entrance



Cut or leave an opening about 12-15 cm wide and 10-12 cm high.

4. Add cosy bedding



Fill the inside with dry leaves.

5. Cover the roof



Cover the house with more leaves, twigs or grass.
Well done! You've made a hedgehog house!

Enter to WIN a goodie bag!

To enter, ask an adult to take a photo of you and your hedgehog house. Upload to social media, tag @CleanupUK & use the hashtag #LOVENATUREPICKLITTER or email pics to info@cleanupuk.org.uk