

# Winter Hedgehog Guide

## Does my garden hog need help?

- 🦔 If out in the day it's not ok so please pick up and take to a rescue.
- 🦔 Please follow your local rescue on social media in order to see the guidance they are giving for your area regarding hibernation size/weight as they will know the weather/capacity for your area.
- 🦔 When still in doubt please call your local rescue in order to discuss the circumstances on a case by case basis and follow their advice.
- 🦔 Use the size guide chart to help follow any advice given.
- 🦔 Obviously, please continue to look out for all the usual injuries and illnesses.

PLEASE DO NOT PICK UP HEDGEHOGS UNNECESSARILY AS IT IS EXTREMELY STRESSFUL, CAN BRING ON INTERNAL PARASITES AND DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD.

## Hibernation Facts

- 🦔 Not all hedgehogs hibernate and most don't all the way through winter so please keep support feeding throughout.
- 🦔 If and when they do it's a combination of the outside temperatures, daylight hours and the hedgehog itself that determines if and how long.
- 🦔 As a gauge, night time temperatures generally need to drop to 5 degrees or lower for a sustained period to bring on hibernation.
- 🦔 Healthy juveniles gain weight extremely quickly and with support feeding can put on as much as 100g a week.



# NO MEALWORMS FOR HEDGEHOGS



**"But the hedgehogs in my garden love mealworms! So why not?"**

We know how much hedgehogs love mealworms - but just because an animal loves something doesn't make it good for them.

Mealworms have a very high phosphorus to calcium ratio - around 20:1. When mammals eat foods that contain phosphorus, the same amount of calcium is needed by the body to process it. If that isn't available from diet, **calcium is leached from the animal's bones** to counteract the imbalance.

When their diets frequently contain a higher phosphorus to calcium ratio, hedgehogs bones become weaker and weaker until they become broken, misshapen and bent - this is called **Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD)** and it is **incredibly painful**. In advanced cases there is nothing we can do for the poor hedgehog except putting it to sleep. MBD is dangerous to all hedgehogs but particularly damaging to juveniles who rarely make it to adulthood.

On top of this hedgehogs do love mealworm - but this means the hoggies will ignore other food and pick out the mealworms. Dried mealworms have **negligible calorific content** meaning they will also struggle to gain weight.

Even if we put out just a few - **hedgehogs travel up to 2km a night**. We have no idea what else is being fed to them, or left behind by birds.

**It is better to be safe than sorry - so please do not feed mealworms to hedgehogs.**



Hagrid

Please feed us cat food (biscuits/kibble or wet food), small dog biscuits or dog food. Alternatively, specific hedgehog food is available but please check it does not contain mealworms, peanuts, sunflower hearts or similar.

Please also leave us some shallow dishes of water around your garden. Thank you!

Peanuts, sunflower hearts, oats, raw meat (particularly chicken and beef 'chuck') and offal also have very high phosphorus to calcium ratios - please do not put them out for Hedgehogs and avoid premixed foods containing them.

Raisins also lead to tooth decay, and bread and milk are very bad for their little tummies.



**BERTIE'S R&R**  
WILDLIFE REHABILITATION AND RELEASE



# ***Foods You Should NOT Feed to Wild Hedgehogs.***



**MILK:** Hedgehogs are lactose intolerant. Its consumption causes severe diarrhoea, which can kill.



**MEALWORMS, PEANUTS & SUNFLOWER HEARTS:** These have no nutritional value and are very bad for hedgehogs. The high amount of phosphorous causes the body to strip calcium from the bones resulting in a painful and life-threatening disease called Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD). Peanuts can also get stuck on the roof of the mouth and prevent the hedgehog from eating causing starvation.



**RAW MEAT & POULTRY:** These are also high in phosphorous and are a potential source of salmonella.

**BREAD, BISCUITS & CAKE:** These contain no nutrients and are often high in sugar.

