

# All about...

## Hedgehogs



Hedgehogs are a largely nocturnal species, as they are unlikely to come out during the day. In the daytime, they spend a considerable amount of time sleeping in nests under thick bushes or shrubs.



### Fascinating Facts

The hedgehog got its name because it roots through hedges searching for food (hedge), while grunting like a pig (hog); this is why it's called a hedgehog!

They have about 5,000 spines. Each spine lasts about a year before it drops out and a replacement grows.

### Where Do They Live?

Hedgehogs can be found in almost all areas of the UK, except some of the Scottish islands. They tend to be scarce in wetland areas, pine forests and the highlands, where food and nesting sites are harder to find. Hedgehogs prefer moist habitats and live either on the ground or under the ground. They make habitats in farmlands, gardens, or even in parks. They live in nests under hedges or where ground-dwelling insects and other invertebrates are in large quantity.

### Favourite Foods

The hedgehog has a reputation as being the 'gardener's friend' as it loves eating so many 'pests'. Some of their favourite foods are small creatures such as insects, worms, centipedes, snails, mice, frogs and snakes.

### Staying Safe

Hedgehogs have sharp spikes on their back, and when they are scared they curl up into a ball. Hedgehogs often roll up into a tight ball to protect themselves. As they feel threatened, they make their muscles active, which causes their spines to straighten. It is the only mammal native to Britain that has spines.

**Task—please answer the following questions.**

1. What type of animals are hedgehogs?
2. What do they do during the day?
3. Where do hedgehogs live?
4. Why won't you find many hedgehogs in wetland areas, pine forests or the highlands of Scotland?
5. Why do some people call hedgehogs 'the gardener's friend'?
6. How do hedgehogs stay safe?
7. Write an interesting fact about hedgehogs.