

HOW TO HELP WILDLIFE

Your step-by-step guide to making a hedgehog hibernaculum.



Hedgehog photo: Jon Hawkins - Surrey Hills Photography

Hedgehogs are one of the few mammals found in the UK that hibernate over winter. As autumn draws in, hedgehogs start to look for a place to call home for the colder months. They need to keep their temperature stable, but not necessarily warm, and although they hibernate until spring, they usually move to a new space at least once during this period. You can invite your neighbourhood hedgehogs into your garden this autumn by creating a hedgehog hibernaculum, out of old bits and bobs you can find around your house.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED • A large storage tub with lid • A sturdy tube of diameter at least 13 cm and length at least 30cm • Hay and leaves • A drill, strong scissors or a Stanley knife • Optional - smaller tube



Start

Gather all your materials – go for a walk and forage some dry leaves to make your hibernaculum extra cosy.



Step 1

Choose where you want your tunnel entrance to connect and draw around the tube to mark where to cut.



Step 2

Wear goggles and be careful of sharp corners. Cut out the circle shape and sit the tube inside the hole – you can use a circular attachment on a drill, a Stanley knife or strong scissors.



Step 3

Smooth any sharp edges with tough black outdoor tape.



Step 4

Drill some breathing holes near the top of the tub. You can also add an extra-large breathing tube.



Step 5

Half fill the tub with hay. Close the lid and place in the garden in a cosy spot. Cover the finished hedgehog home in branches and leaves.

If you make your own **hedgehog hibernaculum**, we'd love to see it, **send your pictures to magazine@essexwt.org.uk**.

