

Incorporating Hedgehog Holes Into Fencing - Advice for Design and Installation

What are hedgehog holes?

Hedgehog holes are gaps in the base of fences or walls that allow hedgehogs to pass through. The recommended size for a hedgehog hole is 13cmx13cm.

How do hedgehog holes help hedgehogs?

Hedgehogs travel up to 2km in a single night [1]. They need to be able to move in and out of gardens to find food, nesting sites, and mates. Ensuring that gardens are connected by hedgehog holes also makes it easier for hedgehogs to move around without having to cross roads. This reduces the chances of hedgehogs being hit by a vehicle.



Why do we need to help hedgehogs?

There has been huge decline in the population of hedgehogs in recent decades. Since the year 2000 hedgehog numbers have declined by half in rural areas and a third in urban areas [2]. In 2020 hedgehogs were classified as 'vulnerable to extinction' in the UK [3]. We need to help hedgehogs now to avoid them disappearing completely from the UK.

Why are gardens and urban areas so important to hedgehogs?

Although hedgehog numbers are still declining, the State of Britain's Hedgehogs 2022 report, published by the People's Trust for Endangered Species and the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, shows that populations in urban areas seem to be stabilising and possibly even increasing [4]. This is most likely due to people making their gardens hedgehog friendly.



Hedgehog friendly gardens can provide hedgehogs with food, water and shelter and so are very important habitats. A study found that hedgehogs visit an average of 8 gardens a night [5], so ensuring that these habitats are connected and that hedgehogs can move around to find enough food is vital.

Do hedgehog holes help other species too?

Yes, hedgehog holes aid movement and population dispersal of many other species such as amphibians, reptiles, and other small mammals. Habitat fragmentation is a big reason for the decline of many species and hedgehog holes help to combat this by improving habitat connectivity.

Page 1

Incorporating Hedgehog Holes Into Fencing - Advice for Design and Installation



Where should hedgehog holes be installed?

Ideally a hedgehog hole should be installed on each side of a garden. This includes the back fence as well as the left and right sides. It is especially important to include a hole in the back fence as well as the side fences if the back fence has good hedgehog habitat (such as another garden or a green space) on the other side of it. If the front garden is fenced then it should also have hedgehog holes installed. It is best to also have a link between the front and back gardens, for

example by leaving a 13cm height gap at the bottom of side gates to allow hedgehogs to pass underneath. All customers having fencing installed should be offered the option of having hedgehog holes included in the fences.

How should they be installed?

Gravel boards with hedgehog holes pre-cut are available – this is the easiest way to provide hedgehog holes in new fences. Fence panels with built-in hedgehog holes are available from some companies. Hedgehog holes can also be added to fences by cutting a 13x13cm hole at the base of the fence. Companies who manufacture their own gravel boards or fence panels should consider adding versions with pre-cut hedgehog holes to their range.

What else should be considered during fencing installation?

When fences are being installed it is important that installers do not leave holes or trenches uncovered with no escape route overnight as hedgehogs could fall in and become trapped. Installers should also be careful of places where hedgehogs might be nesting such as in long grass, leaf piles, wood piles, shrubs and hedges and should not use strimmers, saws or other tools in these areas without checking for hedgehogs first. If companies have been asked to remove hedges, bushes, log piles or wild areas to install a fence then they should check the areas thoroughly for hedgehogs before doing any work, and should not remove these habitats during November-March as hedgehogs could be hibernating in there. If a hedgehog is found then the British Hedgehog Preservation Society should be contacted for advice on 01584 890801. An online directory of wildlife rescue centres is available at helpwildlife.co.uk.



Page 2

Incorporating Hedgehog Holes Into Fencing - Advice for Design and Installation

Suppliers and manufacturers of hedgehog friendly gravel boards:

Jacksons Fencing

https://www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk/product/sc_667610/hedgehog-gravel-board-for-use-with-slotted-posts-1.83m-x-150-x-28mm-incl.1-x-end-packer-1-x-length-packer-jakcured

Selco

<https://www.selcobw.com/supreme-pro-hedgehog-hole-gravel-board-47-x-295-x-1830mm>

Naylor Concrete

<https://www.naylorconcrete.co.uk/fencing-systems/slotted-concrete-fence-posts-gravel-boards/product/hedgehog-friendly-gravel-boards>

Stockport Fencing

<https://www.stockportfencing.co.uk/product/6-x-1-concrete-hedgehog-base-panel-gravel-board/>

Salop Fencing Supplies

<https://www.salopfencing.co.uk/gravel-boards/>

Kebur Garden Materials

<https://www.kebur.co.uk/product/hedgehog-friendly-concrete-gravel-board/>

Denbigh Timber Products

<https://www.denbightimberproducts.co.uk/product/hedgehog-friendly-concrete-gravel-board/>

Essex Concrete and Fencing

https://www.essexconcreteandfencing.com/concrete_gravelboards

Jarrett Fencing

<https://www.jarrettfencing.co.uk/product/hedgehog-gravel-board/>

Knight Fencing

<https://knight-fencing.co.uk/hedgehog-friendly-fencing/>

Supreme Concrete

<https://www.ibstock.co.uk/product/hedgehog-friendly-concrete-gravel-board>

Welch Fencing (North West)

<https://www.garden-fence-panels.co.uk/concrete-posts-bases/concrete-gravel-boards/hedgehog-friendly-concrete-base-panel-plain/>

Page 3

Incorporating Hedgehog Holes Into Fencing - Advice for Design and Installation

Other hedgehog friendly fencing options:

Quercus Fencing – Natural oak woven fencing panel with built-in hedgehog hole

<https://www.quercusfencing.co.uk/hedgehog-friendly-fencing/>

Birkdale DuraPost Hedgehog Hole

<https://www.birkdalesales.com/resources/birkdale-blog/why-didnt-the-hedgehog-cross-the-road>

Chart Fencing and Sheds (Kent and East Sussex) - Hedgehog highway hole cutting and plaque service

<https://www.chartfencing.co.uk/Hedgehog-Fence-Highway/3002H>

MFS Fencing (Warwickshire) – Bespoke hedgehog friendly options

<https://mfsfencing.co.uk/>

Timloc Hedgehog Highway – Frame for hedgehog holes

<https://timloc.co.uk/products/hedgehog-highway/>

References

[1] Hedgehog Street, Where do hedgehogs live?, <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/about-hedgehogs/where-do-they-live/>. (Date Accessed: 21/07/2023)

[2] Hedgehog Street, Hedgehog conservation strategy and population trends, <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/about-our-hedgehog-street-campaign/stateof/>. (Date Accessed: 21/07/2023)

[3] The Mammal Society, Red List for Britain's Mammals 2020, https://www.mammal.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/MS_RL20_Britain.pdf. (Date Accessed 21/07/2023)

[4] Hedgehog Street, The State of Britain's Hedgehogs 2022, <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/SoBH-2022-Final.pdf>. (Date Accessed 21/07/2023)

[5] Gazzard, A., Yarnell, R.W. & Baker, P.J. Fine-scale habitat selection of a small mammalian urban adapter: the West European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). *Mamm Biol* 102, 387–403 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42991-022-00251-5>

For any questions about the contents of this leaflet please email charlotte@habitatsandheritage.org.uk

Page 4