



Discovering whether hedgehogs are using your garden is easy, fun and a fantastic family activity to get stuck into in the great outdoors.



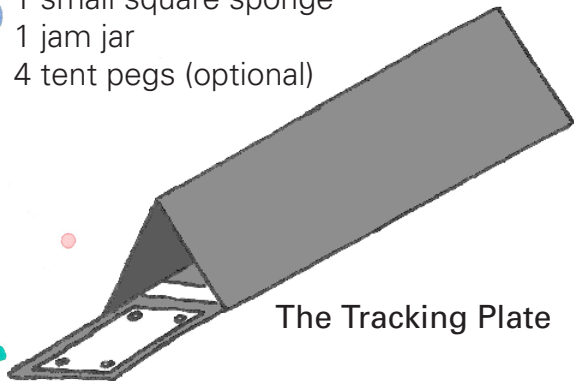
British Hedgehog Preservation Society



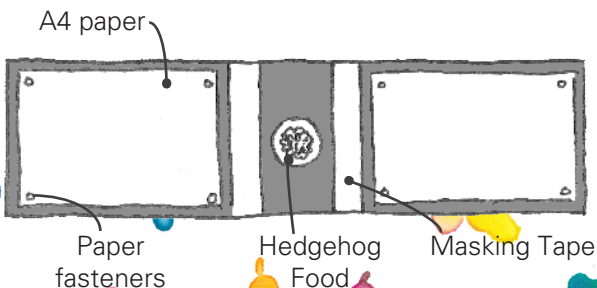
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What you will need:

- 1 footprint tunnel
- Fine charcoal & vegetable oil/powder paint
- Hedgehog food or meaty cat/dog food
- 10 sheets of A4 white paper
- 8 brass paper fasteners/paper clips
- 1 small, shallow dish for food
- 1 small square sponge
- 1 jam jar
- 4 tent pegs (optional)



The Tracking Plate



Your footprint survey can take place at any time **between May and September** and should last for **five consecutive nights**. The aim is to draw hedgehogs into a tunnel using hedgehog food as bait. Once inside the tunnel their paws will get covered in an ink mixture and as they exit paw prints will be left behind on white A4 paper inside the tunnel.

1. Prepare your tunnel

Inside your jam jar mix up a 1:1 solution of charcoal powder and vegetable oil. Take the tracking plate out of the tunnel and use the sponge to apply a 2mm thick layer of the charcoal mix to the masking tape strips. Write the date on two pieces of paper and use paper fasteners to attach one sheet to each end of the tracking plate, piercing the plastic if necessary. Add hedgehog food to the bowl and place in the centre of the tracking plate. Carefully put the tracking plate back into the tunnel.

2. Position your tunnel

Your tunnel should be placed lengthways along an edge e.g. hedge. The entrance and exit should be lying flat against the ground to allow the easiest possible access. If you want to anchor your tunnel to the ground, use tent pegs to do so.

3. Survey

Leave the tunnel overnight and return to check it in the morning. Take out the tracking plate, remove the paper and replace it with fresh sheets. Replenish the supply of food.



Hedgehog in tunnel, 2016

If you have recorded footprints use an ID guide to identify the animals which have left their mark. Repeat your survey for 4 more nights and use a table to keep track of your results.

Getting a Tunnel

Tunnels can be made from scored correx plastic held together with velcro, masking tape strips for the paint to go on and a petri dish to hold the food. Alternatively they can be purchased from <https://www.wildcare.co.uk/tracking-tunnel.html>. You can also make a footprint trap using sand: <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activity-sheets>.

Important Health and Safety

Always wash hands after touching the tunnel. Many small mammals will be in and out of your tunnel. They may leave urine and faeces behind which can be harmful to humans. Rodents can carry Weil's disease so please wash hands thoroughly before eating, drinking or smoking.