

# Danger recognized – danger averted

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Please take a look at your garden and your surroundings and try to see them through the eyes of a hedgehog. Many dangers that we are often not even aware of pose a threat to the health or even the lives of hedgehogs. This leaflet is intended to bring awareness to the recognition of such dangers and the fact that with little effort they can often be avoided, mitigated or eliminated. Prevention is better than cure!

## 1 Danger from garden tools

### 1.1 Lawn mowers | brush cutters | edge cutters

By mowing under bushes, hedges and in un-cleared places, many hedgehogs that like to sleep in such places during the day are mutilated or fatally injured. High grass should only be cut following a prior inspection or – even better – avoided altogether.



Lawn trimmers – dangerous “hedgehog trimmers”

### 1.2 Mowing robots

Little is known about the effects of mowing robots on small mammals, beetles and other invertebrates. For the sake of protecting twilight and night active hedgehogs, such devices should only be used during the day. When buying a mowing robot please pay attention to

sensitive shock and height sensors, and to not set the ground clearance too low.

### 1.3 Pitch forks | spades | shovels

When moving compost heaps, green waste and piles of leaves etc. care must be taken. Hedgehogs could be taking shelter in them.



Pitch forks – stab wounds for spiny animals

### 1.4 Leaf blower vacuums

These machines don't only suck in leaves, but also small creatures that serve as hedgehog food, and even small hedgehogs. They can literally chop up the animals. If the use of such a device cannot be avoided, you should definitely choose the low level blowing setting. Where possible blow leaves under bushes and hedges rather than removing them completely from gardens and parks, as hedgehogs use the leaves as a nesting material.



Leaf blower vacuums – nest and food destroyers

## 2 Dangers around the house

### 2.1 Cellar windows | light shafts

To prevent hedgehogs and other small animals from falling into light shafts or even cellar windows, such places should be secured with a close-meshed grille or, respectively, with standard light shaft covers, e.g. made of aluminium or acrylic glass.



*Unsecured light shaft – a danger of falling*

### 2.2 Metal fences | Wire mesh fences

Properties are increasingly being enclosed using narrow metal fences. To make it possible for hedgehogs to pass through all that is needed is a 10 x 10 cm opening in the mesh.

Hedgehogs can easily get caught in coarse meshed wire fences when they try to slip through them. Remedy: Either place the fence from the outset in a way that small animals can crawl under it, or bend the wire upwards in certain places.



*Wire mesh fence without opening – no entry*

### 2.3 Cellar steps

Hedgehogs that have fallen down a cellar staircase can easily escape if you place a brick at the side of each step to reduce the height of the steps.



*Reduced step height – best hedgehog help*

### 2.4 Ground sleeves for rotary clothes lines, flagpoles etc.

Although ground sleeves are quite narrow, small hedgehogs can fall into them. The sleeves of rotary clothes lines should be closed with the attached lids, holes for poles should be secured for example, with a wooden plug.

### 2.5 Swimming pools | garden ponds

Hedgehogs can die a terrible death by drowning in steep garden ponds and swimming pools. A board with cross-beams or a reed mat (weighted down with stones at both ends) can serve as an exit aid and thus save lives.



*Perfect exit aid – out of the pond*



## 2.6 Getting locked up in garden sheds etc.<sup>4</sup>

When garages, garden sheds or greenhouses are closed up late in the evening or at night, hedgehogs sometimes inadvertently get locked in. A small escape opening, or a flap in the wall or door that can only be opened from the inside will give them a way out.



**Please be aware: If you discover a hedgehog nest in a garden shed, leave it in place and make sure that the mother hedgehog can go in and out unhindered.**

## 3 Danger from pest control

### 3.1 Insect and weed killers | artificial fertilizers



*Chemicals in the garden – nothing for hedgehogs*

Insecticides (including slug pellets), weedkillers and chemical fertilizers severely disturb the ecological balance in gardens. They kill important food animals for hedgehogs. In addition, negative health impacts on hedgehogs through physical contact and through ingestion cannot be ruled out. The alternative is organic gardening!

### 3.2 Mouse traps and rat traps

Traps should be placed on tables, in or on boxes, on walls or stacks of boards... at a height of at least 50 cm, so that they can only be reached by rodents, and not by hedgehogs.



*Live trap on the ground – Hedgehog trap*

### 3.3 Toxic bait | rat poison

Toxic bait against rodents should only be used in bait boxes. Rat poison in particular must never be put out in the open!



*Bait box – poison is only accessible to pests*

The use of rat poison is not only fatal for rodents, but can also have devastating health consequences for protected wild animals, pets and children. Because of this private use has been prohibited since 01.01.2013. If rats are attracted to a feeding place set up for hedgehogs, hedgehog feeding must be stopped immediately!

## 4 Dangers in the fields and the countryside

### 4.1 Bird nets in fruit and wine growing areas

Nets over berry bushes should not hang down all the way to the ground. Hedgehogs and birds can get entangled in them. In vineyards the nets must be stretched tightly and stop 40 cm above the ground.



*Fruit nets down to the ground – a danger to life*

### 4.2 Ties and covers from hay bales and straw bales

In and around farms, hedgehogs get caught time and again in carelessly left straw ties and remnants of bale covers, or are even “disposed of” with the latter.



*Straw tie around the body – a certain death*

### 4.3 Fishing nets, fishing lines etc.

Fishing traps and nets are not allowed to be stored outdoors, e.g. on camping sites or under caravans! Fishing lines should be stored safely so that hedgehogs do not get tangled up in them.

### 4.4 Wire coils

Wire coils should not be stored on the ground where they could endanger hedgehogs, as they get caught in them and cannot free themselves.



*Wire coil outdoors – hedgehog life in danger*

### 4.5 Electric fences for sheep

The electric nets, that are often used in sheep farming, are death traps for hedgehogs if the live wires are too close to the ground. The hedgehogs get an electric shock then curl up around the wire in pain and fear, dying a miserable death. The use of flexible fencing systems without vertical wires is the animal friendly alternative.



*Electric fences for sheep – no chance for hedgehogs*

## 5 Dangerous garbage

### 5.1 Tins | Cups

Curious hedgehogs look for leftovers in thoughtlessly discarded containers – cat food or dog food tins, ice cream and yoghurt cups – and may get stuck. Without help they cannot free themselves and die in misery.



*Thrown away plastic cups – the danger of suffocation*

### 5.2 Packaging

Packaging such as the plastic rings from drink cans is also life threatening for hedgehogs. Anyone who drops or throws such objects on the ground is prepared to let hedgehogs die a dreadful death.



*Plastic ring – removed just in time*

### 5.3 Other refuse

Garbage, which is dumped somewhere in the field or forest, usually contains objects that are dangerous to wild animals. For example, animals cannot get out of the metal springs of old sofas, they cut their paws on broken glass, and leaked used oil stains their fur forever. Plastic bottles take 100–1000 years to break down, a tin can 10–100 years. Even chewing gum needs 1–5 years to break down. Waste belongs in the garbage can or in the recycling centre!



*“Wild Dumpster” – life threatening*

### 5.4 Garbage bags | plastic bags

Plastic bags and full garbage bags (e.g. German “yellow sacks”) should be tied up and not placed on the ground outdoors. Hedgehogs looking for shelter will tear up the bags, crawl into them and are then taken away with the garbage collector. It is best to keep the sacks hung up in a safe place until the collection day.



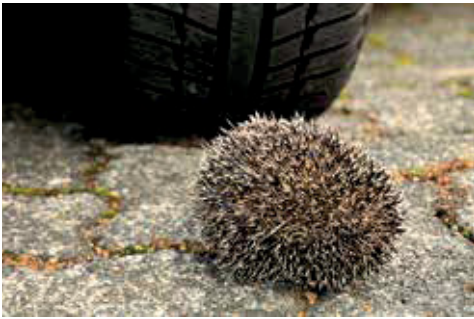
*Yellow sacks – danger in front of the door*



## 6 Other environmental dangers

### 6.1 Road traffic

Countless hedgehogs die in road traffic every year. Observing speed limits and driving with particular attention and preparedness to brake at dusk and at night – especially on roads lined with hedges or bushes on both sides – can save hedgehog lives!



Road traffic – death trap no. 1

### 6.3 Pits | shafts | trenches

Hedgehogs often fall into steep-walled pits, shafts and ditches from which they cannot get out on their own. To help them get out, you can put a board in the pit or you can slope the end of a ditch with earth at an angle (ramp). This procedure should also be suggested to workers who are involved in the construction of pipes for gas, electricity, water, telephone and TV cables!



Unsecured trench – no escape

### 6.2 Traditional fires and garden fires

Immediately before lighting traditional fires – if they are actually permitted in that area – or burning garden waste, the piles must be moved carefully. Hedgehogs could have hidden under them and are at risk of dying a terrible death.



Traditional fire – hot death

### 6.4 Gullies | Drainage shafts

Ground level gullies on roads and the drainage shafts in vineyards are deadly traps for hedgehogs and other small animals that starve or drown in them. Narrower bars or exit aids offer them a chance to free themselves.



Drain with small opening slits – hedgehog-proof

## 6.5 Dogs

Hunting dogs<sup>8</sup> can seriously injure or kill hedgehogs. When dogs dig them out of their hibernation nest most of those hedgehogs die. Dogs should be kept under supervision outdoors, kept on a leash in the evening and not allowed to roam around the garden freely in the dark. It is also recommended not to leave any food in the dog's kennel at night as it might attract hungry hedgehogs!



*Hunting dog – no chance for spiky balls*

## 6.6 Cat-scare devices

Increasingly ultrasonic devices are being used to drive away unwanted cats from around the house and garden. For the human ear the high-pitched sounds are imperceptible. Hedgehogs with their exceptionally good hearing and clear perception of high frequencies find these devices very painful. As a result they leave such areas avoid these gardens in future.



*Extreme ultrasonic sounds – hedgehogs on the run*



**Many other dangers threaten hedgehogs!**  
By dealing responsibly and carefully with our environment,  
we can reduce numerous dangers and thus avert so much animal suffering.

### Imprint

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