

# Furry Furniture

## Attracting mammals to your garden



Mammals have a hard time in our concrete, urban world. Hedgehogs, foxes, bats, and also mice, voles and shrews all need to find somewhere to live and enough food to eat.

This is where you and your garden can help. Feeding your garden mammals can be just as enjoyable and entertaining

as feeding the birds - and just as valuable a way to look after our native wildlife.

Many mammal homes and feeders can be created easily from scrap materials and installed in the garden.

This factsheet shows how to make some of these features, from a mammal feeding table for mice and voles to a special hedgehog house suitable for hibernating hedgehogs.



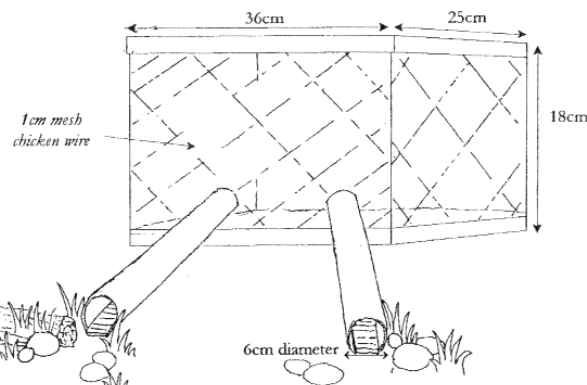
### Mammal table

#### For watching mice and voles

This is just like a bird table - except for feeding small mammals! Build a frame on a wooden board - any old scrap wood will do, even an old tree stump - recommended size is 36 cm x 25 cm and 18 cm high, and enclose with 1 cm chicken wire. Place near a window for ideal viewing opportunities, as shown below.

#### You will need....

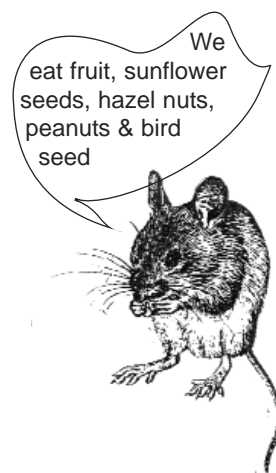
- A Flat piece of wood with an area of at least 36 cm x 25 cm
- Four posts x 18 cm high.
- Chicken wire 1 cm mesh.
- 2 x tubes 6 cm diameter.
- 'Ladders' of roughened wood.



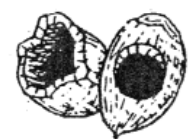
- 1 **Attach two pipes** 6 cm diameter to the tables as entrance and 'emergency exit' tunnels.
- 2 **Add a grooved wooden 'floor'** to the tunnel to aid climbing (especially if at a steep angle.)
- 3 **Provide lots of cover** such as logs, stones and vegetation at the tunnel entrances.

#### Tips

- Smear peanut butter inside the entrance tunnels as an invitation to your small mammals to dine at the table.
- Watch your mammals under a red light which will disturb them less than white.



Who's been eating at my table? **Bank vole** nibbles around hazel nuts are smooth, whereas **wood mice** leave gnaw marks around the hole.



### Feeding garden mammals

#### Foxes

**Wild diet** - very varied. Mainly voles, rabbits and earthworms; also rosehips, seeds, fruit, insects and carrion.

**What to feed** - anything! Especially small items like sultanas, raisins, jam sandwiches! Large food items may be buried in the nearest flowerbed for use later.

**Notes** - Cubs active March-September when extra food is much appreciated.



#### Bats

**Wild diet** - Mainly flying insects.

**What to feed** - attract bats with...

- A garden wildlife pond.
- Night-scented flowers (like Honeysuckle, Tobacco plant, Evening Primrose)
- Painted white boards under roof eaves

**Notes** - To make bat homes see our factsheet *Basically Boxes 2: bat boxes*

#### Hedgehogs

**Wild diet** - beetles, earthworms, slugs.

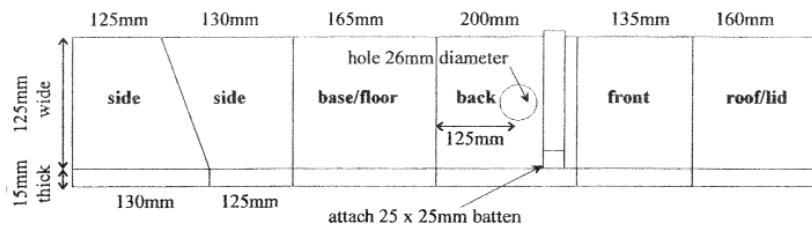
**What to feed** - Special hedgehog food, tinned pet food (non - fishy flavours) sometimes mixed with egg yolk, and water. NOT bread and milk.

**Notes** - Feeding particularly valuable in autumn - hedgehogs need to weigh at least 450g to survive hibernation.

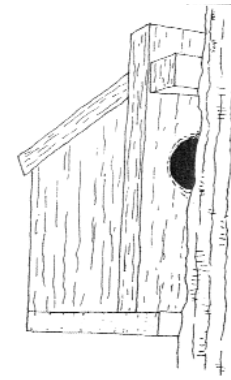


## Mouse house

This is similar to a bird box, except the entrance hole is at the back facing the tree trunk, propped against a lengthened base plate and a 25 mm batten at the top, as shown below.



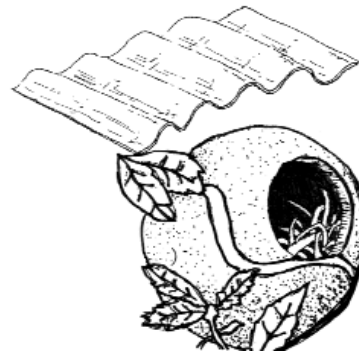
**NB:**  
**Not to scale**



### You will need...

- Timber 1500 x 125 x 15 mm or Old tennis ball
- Straw or other filling, old leaves or Corrugated iron sheeting

- **Build the nest box** from rough cut untreated timber
- **Attach 25 x 25 mm battens** to both sides of the backplate and to the roof (to hold the roof in place and as a support against tree trunk.)
- **Add some nesting material** eg straw or long grass
- **Position 1.5 m high against a tree** with the entrance hole facing the trunk; ideally, place amongst lots of connecting branches and other vegetation.



### Hedge

A fruiting mixed hedge will provide food and cover for many a small mammal, see our 'Hedges for Wildlife' factsheet for more details.

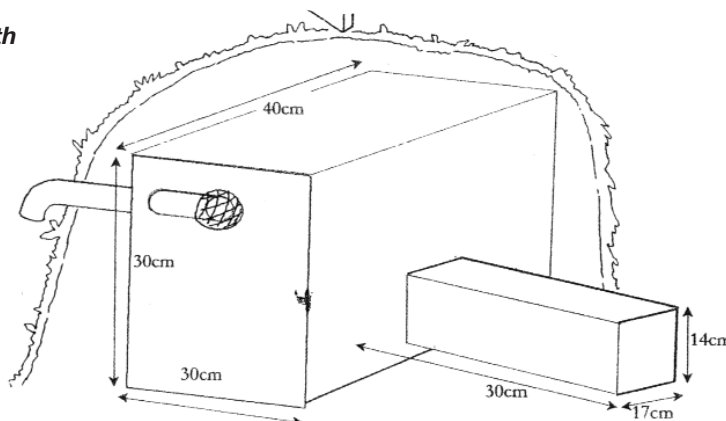
### Second homes

Small mammals may also nest in an old tennis ball, cut open and placed in a hedge or under corrugated iron sheeting

## Hedgehog box - for hedgehog summer nesting and hibernaculum

Build a wooden box from 2 cm thick untreated timber. Recommended dimensions are 30 x 40 x 30 cm high. The box may be used by hedgehogs for temporary summer nesting quarters or to hibernate over winter.

*covered over with plastic sheeting, with soil, leaves, and logs on top*



### You will need...

- 2 x sides 40 x 30 cm.
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- 2 x boards 40 x 30 cm for floor and roof.
- Entrance tunnel 17 x 14 cm high, approximately 30 cm long
- Ventilation tube, covered at one end with gauze or mesh.
- Plastic sheeting or bags.
- Bedding such as straw, leaves.

- **Install a ventilation tube** near the top of the box - the outer end should point downwards, while the inside end should be covered with gauze or mesh.
- **Sprinkle some sawdust** or earth onto the floor of the box.
- **Place the box in a log pile**, near a compost heap, or in a shady overgrown corner - cover over the box with plastic sheeting; then pile twigs, soil, logs and stones over the top so that the entrance tunnel pokes out
- **Leave some bedding** material outside, such as straw or leaves.

*for other temporary hedgehog box designs, see our factsheet "Creature Features"*

