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Dear Fellow Allotmenters,

If chrysanthemums and peonies are your birth flowers, then you're in for a treat.

Did you know these flowers have roots in Asia, and some even have royal connections? They've inspired everything from timeless pieces of music to intricate works of art.

Let's dive into what makes chrysanthemums and peonies so special.

Chrysanthemums were first cultivated in China as early as 1500 BC. People ate them in salads and brewed them in tea.

People in Japan gave chrysanthemums a royal status. The highest awards you can receive in Japan for service to the nation are the Supreme Orders of the Chrysanthemum.

National Chrysanthemum Day has been celebrated on **September 9** in Japan since the year 910. It is one of the country's sacred festivals. On this day, people drink sake with chrysanthemum petals.

By the 17th century, chrysanthemums had made their way into European culture. Some European countries, such as **Italy**, associate them with death and use them for funerals and graves.

Chrysanthemums come in many different colors and shades, including pink, red, purple, **orange**, yellow, and white.

In the **United Kingdom**, the National Chrysanthemum Society aims to promote the chrysanthemum. The group organizes events and flower shows around the country.

Peonies have been used in traditional Chinese medicine for 2,000 years. They are used to treat people with blood disorders, congestion, and worms.

The peony is rumored to be one of the first flowers used only for ornamental purposes in the ancient Chinese city of Luòyáng. It is sometimes called “the flower from Luòyáng.”

There are three main types of peonies – tree peonies, herbaceous peonies, and Itoh, or intersectional peonies.

Herbaceous and Itoh peonies need plenty of sunshine to grow, while tree peonies thrive in light shade. If you see peonies in a garden, you're most likely looking at the Chinese peony or the European common peony. These flowers are **white**, rose, pink, and red.

Whether you're celebrating your birthday this **November** or planning a thoughtful gift for a friend, you've now got more insights about these birth flowers!

Thanks for reading
Gareth Richards - Treasurer
Eliz Flats Allotments, Plot 14

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November Jobs on the Allotment

November is the month when the hard frosts and heavy rain usually arrive so it's important to grab whatever time you can on the plot in case you don't get another chance.

Sowing & Planting in November on the Vegetable Plot

Now is the time to plant out your garlic which likes a period of dormancy and cold prior to growing away in the spring.

If you've a heavy soil that tends to hold water there is the danger of the cloves rotting. To stop this, dib your planting hole as usual and then drop some sharp sand or fine gravel in the base of the hole. An inch of sand or grit will provide enough drainage to save the day.

Autumn planted broad beans go in now but do be aware that in northern areas and wet soils the success rate will be lower than the drier and sunnier south-east of the country.

Hardy peas like meteor can also go in now.

It's a little too late for most green manures but early in the month you can sow grazing rye to hold nutrients in the soil over winter.

General Garden Tasks for November

As with October, as ground becomes vacant, you can dig it over and spread manure over the surface. Leave the soil roughly dug in large clumps and the worms will break these up as they get the manure. The freezing and thawing of water in the soil will cause the soil to break up finely so becoming easier to handle in the spring.

Digging over introduces air into the soil, loosening it and avoiding it turning into a solid pan. It also exposes insect pests to the open air where the birds can eat them. keep filling the bin as more leaves fall.

Double or deep digging and introducing manure or composts to the base of the trenches will deepen your top soil providing a better growing medium.

With light, sandy soils digging every year is not needed but heavy soils really benefit from it. It's also the time to lime as required but don't add lime and manure at the same time.

Keep a close eye on your winter brassicas and remember that the birds are hungry at this time of year so cover with netting if required.

With staked Brussels sprouts, double check all is firm or windrock will break the root hairs and cause the sprouts to blow.

If you're making a runner bean trench, keep on filling it, adding a little soil over each layer of kitchen waste as you go.

If you've a good supply of leaves, which should be falling fast now, make leafmould. Start by building a leaf mould cage. Very simple to do, you just drive four stakes into the ground and staple chicken netting around to make the cage.

Pile in the leaves and leave them alone for a year. You will find the pile reduces by two thirds at least, so so keep filling the bin as more leaves fall. If you have one those marvellous garden vacuum mulchers that suck up leaves and chop them, you will find the leaves rot down much more quickly.

Keep an eye out for council sweepers, they may just drop you a load of leaves when they call to collect a few veggies off you.

Fruit

It's pruning time for apples and pears and they'll benefit from some compost around the base as a mulch. With younger, staked trees check the stakes are firm and the ties. Winter winds can shake the roots loose on young trees causing poor growth or even death .

As with October, November is a good month to attend to pruning the raspberries, blackberries and hybrid berries as well as being the ideal time to plant bare rooted canes. Don't forget to add plenty of compost to the soil and 250gr (8oz) per square yard of bonemeal.

November Greenhouse Tasks

If you didn't get chance last month, give the greenhouse a good wash down and clean up prior to insulating if you intend to use it through the winter. Reduce ventilation on colder days but give the house a good airing on sunny days which will stop fungal conditions and especially downy mildew developing. You can continue successional sowing of winter salad crops

Harvest

Your leeks should be coming ready now. Harvest every other one in a row leaving the rest to grow on. Brussels sprouts should be starting as well. Pick from the bottom of the plant upwards. A sprout is for winter, not just for Christmas!

Along with sprouts you can harvest kale and take up the winter cabbages and cauliflowers. A cauliflower tightly wrapped in cling-film kept in the fridge can be kept fresh for as long as six weeks.

Maincrop carrots can be lifted to store safe from pests in damp sand or peat in your store along with parsnips but they do hold in the ground better than carrots.

You could still be harvesting celery and celeriac, kale and kohlrabi as well as turnips, swedes and spinach.

Check any vegetables you have in store and removing anything that has started to rot before it spreads. Potatoes really need to be checked and watch out for slugs that have emerged from a potato to go and damage another one.

Amphibians

D	W	A	N	P	L	C	B	H	I	R	E	J
S	I	R	E	N	Y	T	J	A	D	N	O	R
F	X	G	W	R	S	H	C	Q	R	E	I	M
Z	Y	F	M	X	T	O	A	D	U	C	Y	W
L	U	H	A	I	K	G	E	R	A	T	Z	B
R	T	W	X	P	V	Y	C	D	P	U	Q	P
G	F	R	O	G	M	J	I	J	R	R	V	K
O	P	S	L	U	F	D	L	T	Y	U	G	Z
L	Q	G	O	P	B	P	I	M	U	S	R	N
M	W	Y	T	Z	Y	L	A	F	M	P	S	E
X	S	A	L	A	M	A	N	D	E	R	Y	W
F	Q	M	E	K	V	P	Y	N	T	B	N	T



• OLM

• FROG

• NECTURUS

• TOAD

• SIREN

• CAECILIAN

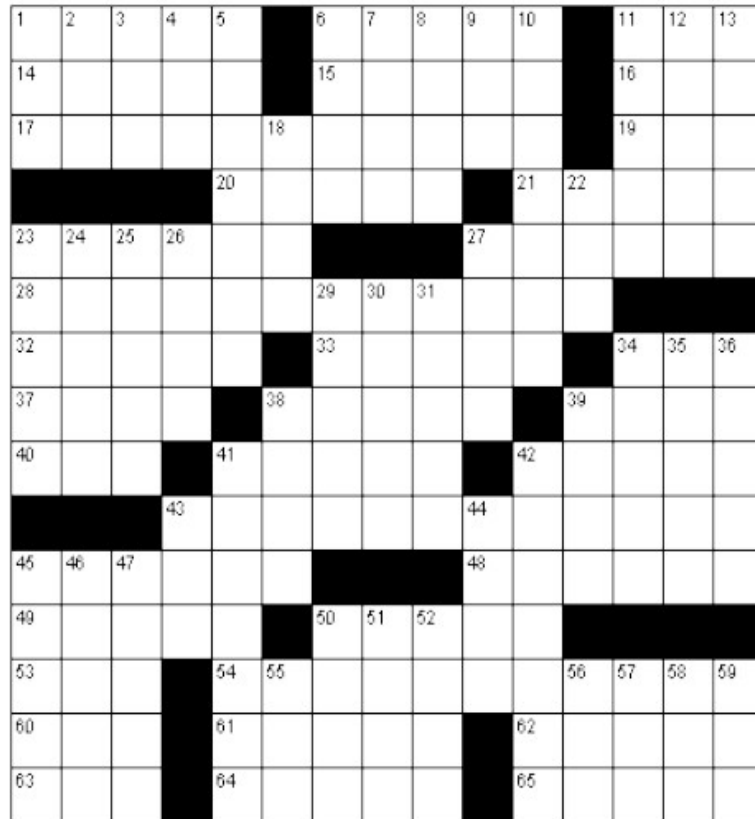
• AXOLOTL

• NEWT

• SALAMANDER



Crossword no.188



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ACROSS

1. Vapors
6. Assistants
11. Autonomic Nervous System
14. Anagram of "Orate"
15. French pancake
16. Standard Operating Procedure
17. Delusions of grandeur
19. A prominent rock
20. Kilns
21. A long metal nail
23. Take on titles or offices
27. Gruff
28. Inhabitants of small Pacific islands
32. Sore
33. Classes by kinds
34. Mouth
37. Singer _____ Fitzgerald
38. Collection of maps
39. Traditional Indian music
40. Whiskey
41. Moan
42. An archaic gold coin
43. Treat differently based on sex or race
45. Guarantee
48. Response
49. The continuation of

a coat collar

50. Monetary unit in Ecuador
53. 3 in Roman numerals
54. Defiant or unmanageable
60. Arranger (abbrev.)
61. Makes secure against leakage
62. Threesomes
63. 24 hour period
64. Steed
65. Give expression to emotion

DOWN

1. Precious stone
2. Metric unit of area
3. Screen Actors Guild
4. 7th letter of the Greek alphabet
5. A wise king of Israel
6. Highest level or degree attainable
7. Anagram of "Rain"
8. Hideouts
9. Prefix indicating "Upon"
10. Lends flavor to
11. On the move
12. Sheltered, secluded places
13. A brief indulgence
18. Roasting appliance
22. Dance step
23. A deep yellow color
24. Goofy
25. Weighing machine
26. Murres
27. Caps or derbies, for example
29. Anagram of "Cotes"
30. Pertaining to the sun
31. Pertaining to modern day Persia
34. A brilliant colored parrot
35. Chalcedony
36. Found in rivers and oceans
38. Anagram of "Ears"
39. Hurries on foot
41. Characteristic of a

- young girl
42. An alcove for dining
43. Deserved
44. A brandy made from the residue of grapes
45. Greek poem of the siege of Troy
46. Nigerian monetary unit
47. Like a steeple
50. Anagram of "Rats"
51. Website addresses
52. A portable container
55. Prefix indicating recent or new
56. A superior limb
57. Biography (abbrev.)
58. A parcel of land
59. East southeast

Link to Brimsmore Garden Centre

We have a Gold Club discount deal with Brimsmore Garden Centre.

They offer all member's 25% discount on Spring bulbs for sale in October and then again a second deal for anything at the Centre that is not on special offer which can be used as many times as you want during January and February.

I have used it for compost in the past and the savings are quite good on your pocket. You can have the items delivered which is free within the Yeovil area or you can pick your items up at the Garden Centre.

Brimsmore Garden Centre website address :

<https://store.thegardensgroup.co.uk>

Email : brimsmore@thegardensgroup.co.uk

Telephone no. : 01935 411000

Address : Brimsmore Gardens
 Tintinhull Road
 Yeovil
 Somerset
 BA21 3NU

Where we meet

Johnson Park, Coronation Avenue, Yeovil. BA21 3DX

as well as

Brimsmore Gardens, Tintinhull Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 3NU

We generally meet twice a month. The last Thursday of the month is reserved for a committee meeting. We discuss all things related to the Association and deal with any matters arising.

We meet at 8pm on these nights in the lounge bar at Johnson Park Sports and Social Club. They have a car park

Minutes are recorded by our Secretary. The Chairman opens the meeting and directs us through the running order and as well as site supervisor's input there is a monthly Treasurer's report.

The other meeting night is a more social event and this takes place on the 1st Thursday of the month. We can invite a speaker, you can buy a drink at the bar and there is a raffle normally run by Phillip.

Three times a year on the 1st Wednesday of the month we meet at Brimsmore Garden Centre for our social. We meet in the Apple Tree restaurant at 6.30pm. Some tea and biscuits are available for free. We try to have a guest speaker at these events or a talk on a garden topic and a raffle run by Phillip's wife.

These three events replace our said Thursday social meetings at Johnson Park.

Your annual membership card gives you the time and dates of meetings for the year ahead. Our membership night for renewals is every March and again a discount night is offered for any garden centre items which are not on special offer.

King Seeds - Top Tips for Seed Sowing

- Use seed sowing compost, not multi-purpose. Multi-purpose compost often contains too much feed which can damage or kill young seedlings before they grow.
- Water with fresh tap water. Avoid using saved rainwater for seeds and young seedlings, as pathogens can build up in water butts and containers which can affect germination. Rainwater is fine to use on established plants.
- Maintain the correct temperature. Ensure the seeds are kept at their ideal germination temperature.
- Monitor the water levels. Some composts may appear dry on the surface but are moist beneath. Certain seeds such as peas and beans tend to rot off if they are overwatered, yet if they are too dry, their seed coats may not break down properly, preventing germination.
- Water the drill directly when sowing outside during a dry spell. It is important when sowing seeds direct into the allotment soil when the soil is dry, to always water the seed drill first before sowing. Draw out the seed drill, then give a thorough watering so the base of the drill is really wet, then leave to drain for a few minutes before sowing the seed onto the wet soil. Once sown, the seed is then covered over with the dry soil, which traps the moisture below where the seeds need it to germinate. This is a far better method than constantly watering overhead with a rose on a can, which will evaporate with the sun or drying winds and put a hard cap over the soil, making it much harder for the seedlings to push through.

Solution

G	A	S	E	S		A	I	D	E	S		A	N	S
E	R	A	T	O		C	R	E	P	E		S	O	P
M	E	G	A	L	O	M	A	N	I	A		T	O	R
					O	V	E	N	S		S	P	I	K
A	S	S	U	M	E					H	O	A	R	S
M	I	C	R	O	N	E	S	I	A	N	S			
B	L	A	I	N		S	O	R	T	S		M	A	W
E	L	L	A		A	T	L	A	S		R	A	G	A
R	Y	E		G	R	O	A	N		D	U	C	A	T
				D	I	S	C	R	I	M	I	N	A	T
I	N	S	U	R	E					A	N	S	W	E
L	A	P	E	L		S	U	C	R	E				
I	I	I		I	N	T	R	A	C	T	A	B	L	E
A	R	R		S	E	A	L	S		T	R	I	O	S
D	A	Y		H	O	R	S	E		E	M	O	T	E

UK hedgehog facts

The UK is home to just one native hedgehog species – the West European hedgehog.

A gardener's friend and now, sadly, a species vulnerable to extinction in the UK. On this page you'll learn about hedgehog habitats, emotions, dietary needs, breeding seasons, and how we can help hedgehogs thrive



Physical features

Body: Small and round with spines (or 'spikes') over their back, and fur covering their faces. A hedgehog can weigh up to 2kg, and they're typically 15cm to 30cm in length, with a tail only 1cm to 2cm long and legs that are longer than you might think – up to 10cm! – hidden beneath their spines.

Colour: Hedgehogs are usually brown, though some can be albino or even blonde. Their spines are mostly yellow-tipped.

Spines: Hedgehog spines are around 2cm to 3cm in length, made of keratin (the same protein that makes up human hair and nails!). Over time, hedgehogs shed their spines, which are then swiftly replaced by new ones, just like our hair..

Eyes and ears: Hedgehogs have pretty poor eyesight, so they instead rely on their sense of smell to get around and hunt for food. Hedgehogs have short ears, mostly concealed by their fur.

Test your hog knowledge

An adult hedgehog has between 5,000 and 7,000 spines on its little body collecting nesting material. They emerge from hibernation in spring.

If you spot a hedgehog during the daytime, there's a chance it might be sick or injured. Find out how to tell if a hedgehog needs help, and what to do if so.

How to identify hedgehogs

Our only spiny mammal, hedgehogs are well-known creatures with unique physical features. Where and when you might see them. Hedgehogs can be found all across the UK (though there are some Scottish Islands where you won't find any, and others where non-native hedgehogs have been introduced), in habitats like grassland, , heathland and moorland, as well as farmland, woodland, parks and gardens.

As the name suggests, hedgehogs love hedges, bushes and long grass full of bugs to feast on, as well as safe places to shelter.

You're much more likely to see hedgehogs at night, as they're nocturnal creatures. Before hibernation season – from November to mid-March – you might find them out and about foraging for food and and collecting nesting material. They emerge from hibernation in spring.

If you spot a hedgehog during the daytime, there's a chance it might be sick or injured.

How to spot signs of hedgehogs:

Hedgehogs roam at night, so you might only know they've visited by the signs they leave behind, such as:

Poop: Hedgehog droppings are usually around 5 cm in length, cylindrical and dark, full of insect and worm bits. If the poo looks green, slimy, sticky or mucus-covered, this could be a sign that the hedgehog is sick.

Footprints: Hedgehog's front feet leave tracks that look like tiny handprints, whilst their back feet are longer and more narrow. They have five toes on each foot, though only four may be visible in the track.

Noise: Hedgehogs are surprisingly noisy. You might hear them snuffling and huffing outside as they forage (or when they're mating!).

How long do hedgehogs live?

Hedgehogs can live for as long as two to three years, but there are things that can cause a premature death, such as garden accidents, road incidents, bonfires and loss of natural habitats affecting sources of food and shelter.

Hedgehogs are most at risk when:

They are hoglets: As they're vulnerable to predators and their first Winter.

During autumn: If they're unable to build up enough fat reserves before hibernation. There's also an increase of lungworm in autumn.

They're older: As they age, hedgehog teeth wear down, making it harder to chew and digest food.

Found a sick or injured hedgehog?

Strimmer accidents, unchecked bonfires, open ponds or netting left lying around are all risks to a hedgehog's safety. If you find a sick or injured hedgehog in your garden, learn how you can help.

Hedgehog population

A mammal survey conducted in 2018 suggests that the hedgehog population was then around 879,000, with a quarter of that number in urban areas like gardens and parks.

However, over half of our hedgehogs have disappeared from the countryside since 2000, and they're now absent in a third of towns and cities.

This decline is partly due to a loss of natural habitat, which provides both shelter and food for hedgehogs. Fencing, pesticides, garden hazards (like ponds, strimmers and netting) and development and construction also have an impact. And of course, cars are a major threat to hedgehogs, killing thousands each year.

Are hedgehogs legally protected?

Hedgehogs are indirectly protected by the law:

It's illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs, with certain listed methods (Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981).

Cruel treatment of hedgehogs is prohibited (Wild Mammals Protection Act, 1996).

Hedgehogs are considered a species of 'principal importance' under the NERC Act.

Hedgehogs that have been caught, marked and tagged are also protected by the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Yet none of these acts address the reasons behind hedgehog decline. Find out more information on wildlife laws in the UK.

What do hedgehogs eat?

Hedgehogs eat a wide variety of food, though they're mostly insectivorous, so they'll prey on beetles, caterpillars and earthworms – which is why they're gardeners' friends!

Occasionally they may eat amphibians, small rodents and birds that are already dead, slugs and snails, birds' eggs and even fruit. They'll also take advantage of carrion (decaying animal flesh) if nearby.

Hedgehog diets are dependent on the season:

Spring: Hedgehogs eat more snails and slugs.

Summer: With a lot of plants available, hedgehogs can also eat lots of berries and fruit.

Autumn: Hedgehogs eat as much as they can, stocking up on fats for hibernation.

Winter: Hedgehogs are hibernating!

However, a hedgehog's diet has been greatly impacted by the loss and damage of habitats and the use of pesticides on farms and in gardens.

If you want to help a hedgehog ready itself for hibernation, or simply supplement their existing diets, find out what to feed them on our [hedgehogs in the garden](#) page.

When do hedgehogs hibernate?

Hedgehogs hibernate between October or November to around mid-March to April, but it depends on the weather. If it's mild, they might still be active into December.

During hibernation, hedgehogs aren't truly asleep – they drop their body temperature to match their environment, and enter what's called a state of 'torpor'. o down before heading out to begin feasting ahead of the next winter

This is when an animal's temperature, metabolic rate and other bodily functions are lowered to conserve energy.

If you see a hedgehog during the winter, don't worry. Hedgehogs often wake up from hibernation to forage for food or move their nest before going back to sleep. Keep your eye on them, just in case their hibernation has been disturbed and they need help..

Hedgehogs survive the winter by using up the fat stores they've built over the spring and summer. Eating enough nutritious and fatty foods during those months is vital – and this is when supplementary feeding (such as leaving out meaty cat or dog food in your garden for them) can help.

In spring, they reemerge into the wild, waiting for the sun to go down

Hedgehog body language

Hedgehogs, like humans, use their body language to express what they're feeling – often with their spines.

If a hedgehog's spines are down – they're probably relaxed and comfortable.

If you see a hedgehog with its spines up – it most likely feels threatened. Hedgehogs have a muscle that allows them to curl up into a tight and spiky ball, contracting them like a draw-string bag.

They're also incredibly good runners, climbers and can even swim!

Hedgehogs communicate with their faces; forehead furrowing, nose twitching and eyebrows covering their eyes are all used to express relaxation, curiosity, fear and more.

They're noisy animals! Often heard huffing and puffing whilst out foraging and collecting nest material.

Like us, hedgehogs experience an abundance of emotions each and every day. The more you learn about them, the more you can understand what they're feeling and what they might need.

When do hedgehogs breed?

Hedgehog breeding

Hedgehogs breed in the spring and summer, mostly during May and June, though they're able to reproduce between April and September.

Both male and female hedgehogs can mate several times a year with multiple partners.

A hedgehog mating ritual – which involves males attempting to woo the females – can be lengthy and quite loud. It often attracts rival mates, who can square up to one another, butt heads and chase each other.

Hedgehog breeding

A hedgehog female is pregnant for around four weeks. During this time, she'll start building a nursery nesting site for her litter.

Hedgehog birth

Hedgehogs typically give birth in June and July, though baby hedgehogs (hoglets) can appear as early as the spring (after a mild winter) or into autumn. Hoglets are born blind and deaf, with white spines that appear soon after birth.

They'll start leaving the nest to forage with their mother at around four-weeks old – hedgehog mums carry hoglets around in their mouths – and will be independent by about eight weeks.

Litters usually consist of around four to five hoglets, but can be as many as seven! Sadly, usually only two or three hoglets survive the weaning period. Mother hedgehogs can sometimes leave their hoglets, or even eat them if disturbed.

Many people don't have a clue they have nocturnal visitors, but if you leave out food, and it's gone in the morning, keep your eyes peeled at night for a garden visitor. If you suspect hogs but can't ever spot them put a **garden wildlife camera** on your

Christmas list.

What You Can Do to Help Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs really need our help because it's human behaviour causing their decline.

One of the biggest issues for hedgehogs is the fencing epidemic. Hedgehogs are small mammals and although their legs are surprisingly long, they cannot climb over six foot fence panels nor can they burrow through concrete footers.

Hogs need to cover a lot of space each night to find food and with our tendency to block them off, they struggle. **Adult hedgehogs travel between 1-2km per night** and this means they travel over entire housing estates.

You can make a big difference by **creating a hedgehog highway** into your garden. A 15cm x 15cm hole in the bottom of your fencing is enough to invite hogs to your insect and slug banquet. If you have concrete footers dig a tunnel beneath the concrete, use a **concrete breaker** or consider removing the bottom slats of your garden gate for access.



Once you have hedgehog visitors, don't trap them in your garden as a free snail killer, they need to roam and one garden won't provide enough variety even if you give extra foods. We've talked about slug pellets already, **so here are 9 other problems native hogs are facing in the UK.**

1) The Wrong Foods

Milk is extremely bad for hedgehogs, in many cases it causes fatal diarrhea because they are lactose intolerant, but being hedgehogs they drink it anyway. All **wildlife rescues** are pleading with people to stop giving bread and milk and put out fresh water and cat biscuits instead.

Mealworms are like sweets for hogs. They love them without exception, but they are devoid of any useful nutrients, are high in phosphorous and low in calcium. Scientists have discovered hogs are getting metabolic bone disease (soft bendy bones) and

loosing their teeth from the amount of mealworms they are consuming. The same goes for peanuts and sunflower seeds. You can help by leaving out cat food and fresh water each night particularly when the weather is colder, and hogs are struggling to find food. They are usually hungry bods and will munch up your offering with gusto.

2) Landscaping

Another problem is our tendency to **landscape our gardens**, inspired as we are by TV programs.

Hogs like a natural garden with messy corners. Decking, paving, and hard landscaping means less natural habitat for hedgehogs. Consider leaving some rugged areas for hedgehogs to enjoy with leaves, logs and longer grass.

3) Fleas!

Hedgehogs rarely have fleas, but if they do, it's usually a sign of a poorly hog. You must never use spot on treatment for hedgehogs.

You may also see hogs with ticks. This is normal and they drop off before long BUT if your hog has lots, take it to a rescue centre as it may become anaemic and need help. Never try to pull ticks with your hands or burn them off. If you must, use tick-twisters, which are very cheap from pet stores.

6) Ponds

Ponds are a great way to attract wildlife to your garden and hedgehogs can swim if they accidentally fall in when reaching for a drink, but they can't climb steep slippery edges to get out. Eventually they will become exhausted and drown.

Use some planting baskets, large rocks or whatever you can to create a way out. If you are thinking about creating a pond, choose wildlife **pond liners** which are moulded into steps.

7) Holes and Drains

If a hedgehog can fit in a hole or drain it will get stuck there. Hedgehogs are masters of drain blockage, and while trapped there it'll be covered in chemicals, get hypothermia and likely die without rescue. Cover your drains and holes at all times.

8) Netting

Wildlife gets hopelessly trapped in netting, particularly the discarded piles. **Grass snakes**, slow worms, frogs, foxes, your neighbour's cat, birds and yes, hedgehogs, can all get tangled. Hedgehogs can even get tangled in **garden football goal post** netting where their spines do them no favours at all.

If you find wildlife trapped in netting, cut the netting around it and take it all to a vet or wildlife rescue. If you cut the animal

free entirely it is likely to die from infections that gather in the constriction injuries.

9) Disinterest and Lack of Knowledge

People are becoming removed from wildlife, especially in urban environments. It's a real shame that many children have never seen a real life hedgehog going about its business and at the rate they are declining, many never will.

Spread the word about hedgehogs, in particular that they should never be fed milk and bread, and how to cut a highway in your fence line. Knowledge can make a massive difference to our native hedgehogs.

Feed And House A Hedgehog

If you'd like to do more to help, firstly, we recommend you have a look at the **best hedgehog houses** that we tested.

You may find that putting out a dish of food each night attracts cats and foxes that eat all your offerings before Mrs Prickles can arrive. This is a very common problem.

It is annoying when Tiddles helps himself to your hedgehog food, but you can prevent this by making a feeding station. A paving slab on bricks will do the trick, or you can use an upturned plastic storage box with a 15 x 15cm door cut out. Pop a brick on top to weigh it down so unwelcome visitors won't be

able to get in, but your spiky friend can munch away undisturbed.

They are available to buy in garden centres and online, but make sure you choose one with a tunnel on the entrance, as this prevents predators sticking in a paw and dragging out any babies. Place it somewhere cool to prevent heatstroke in the hot months such as a hedge, in the flower border, or under some evergreens.

Don't be tempted to buy the cheap domes of wood and straw, they do look natural but in reality they let in damp and frosts. Anything with metal is no go too, as it will attract condensation. A wooden box with a decent floor, a roof and a tunnel is ideal. There are also some great eco-friendly nest boxes too. Pop in some dust-free hay or shredded newspaper and leave some bedding lying around so the hog can choose what they want to sleep in.



When To Rescue A Hedgehog

You've spotted a hedgehog, great! If it's out at night, sunrise or early evening and moving purposefully then just admire and leave it alone. Don't pick up a hedgehog for fun no matter how cute it looks.

If you disturb a nest, back off and keep an eye out. Mother hogs may kill or abandon their babies if disturbed. The mother may leave that night to find a better undisturbed place and if she doesn't take the babies, call a rescue straight away.

5) Small hogs

Small hogs need help if they are out in the day time, but if it is purposefully foraging in the evening or early morning put out some food and water. Tiny babies need their mums so rescue and call a professional – if they are squeaking, that's a sign of distress.

6) It is winter

Any hedgehog that weighs less than 600 grams in November isn't likely to make it through hibernation. To help, you should weigh the hog with electronic scales and if it's under 600g phone a rescue. They can advise on whether to bring it in for overwintering or if releasing with some supplemental feeding is a better option.

7) It is dead

If you've found a dead hedgehog in winter be very cautious and do not bury it unless you are absolutely sure because it may be hibernating. A hedgehog's temperature drops during hibernation, so it'll feel stone cold and you probably won't spot any breathing either. It sounds strange, but contact an expert to find out for sure. Don't bury it alive.

8) It looks 'different'

Exotic hedgehogs are being found abandoned in the wild. These are pets bred for human pleasure and they can't survive in the wilds of the UK. If you spot an unusually coloured hedgehog, paler than a native UK hog, all white, with large ears, big feet or a pinky- white belly, then it's likely to be an exotic species. Take it to a vet to be sure. Of course, you may have found the very rare albino hedgehog in which case it can be released where you found it.

How To Pick Up A Hedgehog

But hedgehogs are spiky!

Yes, they are spiky and those spikes can hurt, but that's not a reason to leave a suffering hedgehog.

They won't bite, and you can easily pick one up with gardening gloves or a towel. Alternatively, smooth your hand down its back so the hog bristles and rolls into a ball, then roll it sideways on your palm as this stops you squeezing and getting spiked. Fully grown, healthy adults are very light and don't usually weigh more than 600grams or so.

Once you have the hedgehog, don't drop it because they don't bounce well. Place it in a cat carrier or cardboard box with high

sides, because they are masters of escape, and put it somewhere quiet and cool while you get professional advice.

If it is winter the hog will need some warmth. Wrap a hot water bottle in a towel or fill a plastic bottle with hot water and place it in with the hog making sure it can move away if it starts to overheat. There is little point rescuing a hedgehog only to cook it.



A Prickly Problem

Hedgehog numbers are dwindling at the same rate as tiger numbers. Without change they will become endangered and possibly disappear from our communities entirely.

This non-threatening, intelligent mammal is often the first point of contact people have with our native wildlife. What would a garden be without the romantic hedgehog? It's so easy to help

these struggling, endearing little creatures and your garden can mean life or death for them.

If you can't physically help, consider donating to a wildlife rescue. Hedgehog rescues take in hundreds of patients each year and they get no funding.

Helping our wildlife survive means your grandchildren may have the opportunity to see a wild hedgehog. If we ignore the plight of our prickly friends, then it's very likely we won't be seeing them in the near future and that will be to the detriment of us all.

Weed Identification Guide – 70 Common Weed Species



Weeds, weeds, everywhere. We just can't escape them. They're destroying our lawns and springing up in the gaps in our patios. We know they're unwanted, but we often can't identify the exact plant species.

This article discusses 70 common garden weeds, including what they look like, where they grow, and something you may not have known about these troublesome plants!

1. Stinging Nettle



Botanical Name: *Urtica dioica*

Height: 1 – 2 metres

Notes: The Stinging Nettle is known by most for the skin irritation it causes upon direct contact. It can be found in most waste areas, woods, and beside hedges.

Nettle stems contain a fibre used to make linen and clothing for just under **3,000 years**.

2. Dandelion



Botanical Name: *Taraxacum officinale*

Height: 10 – 15 cm

Notes: A well-known garden weed with vibrant yellow flowers. You'll typically find Dandelions in cultivated land and grassy areas.

A **yellow dye** can be extracted from Dandelion flowers. The plant is believed to **reduce cholesterol** and blood pressure, stabilise blood sugar levels and lessen inflammation.

3. Poison Ivy



Botanical Name: *Toxicodendron radicans*

Height: Up to 2 metres

Notes: Poison Ivy causes skin irritation through direct contact. You can find this plant growing in the forest understory. It has woody stems and almond-shaped leaves that transform from green to red during autumn.

4. Ground Ivy



Botanical Name: *Glechoma hederaceae*

Height: 5 – 50 cm

Notes: Ground Ivy grows in woodlands and garden lawns. It has highly distinctive kidney-shaped leaves and violet flowers. **European settlers** carried this popular salad green around the globe, so it became established far and wide.

5. Common Daisy



Botanical Name: *Bellis perennis*

Height: 2.5 – 7.5 cm

Notes: This delicate beauty has dainty white petals and a bright yellow centre. It usually appears in lawns and meadows.

It's centre-stage in the familiar rhyme "He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not," whereby petals are removed 1 by 1 to determine if the person's crush returns their affection.

6. Creeping Speedwell



Botanical Name: *Veronica filiformis*

Height: 2.5 – 5 cm

Notes: Found in lawns, meadows, and alongside grassy paths. This low-growing perennial has white and blue flowers with violet streaks.

Creeping Speedwell is loved among humans and insects alike, attracting many butterflies and bees. But it's toxic, so keep a watchful eye over your children and pets!

7. White Clover



Botanical Name: *Trifolium repens*

Height: 2.5 – 5 cm

Notes: This is typically encountered in lawns and gardens. Its spindly stems hold up a globe-shaped flowerhead comprising up to 50 flowers.

The leaves form the symbolic shape of a shamrock. White Clover is used for feeding livestock due to its high protein content.

8. Red Clover



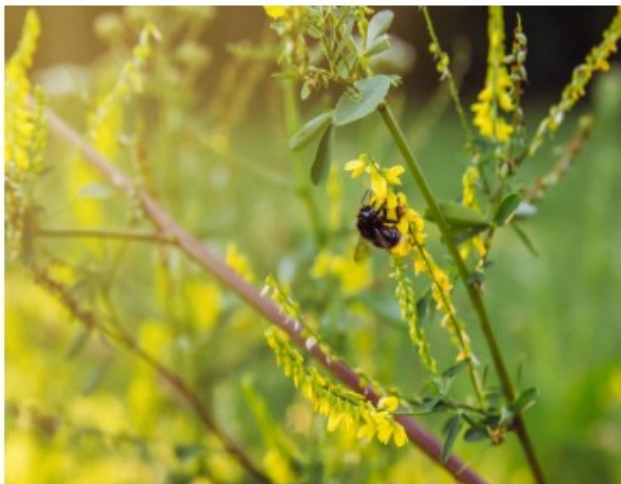
Botanical Name: *Trifolium pratense*

Height: 20 – 80 cm

Notes: This sports the characteristic clover appearance but with red-pink blooms. Red Clover favours grassy habitats.

It has a taproot, enabling it to survive drought. It also fixes nitrogen in the soil, making it more nutrient-rich; many plants benefit from this!

9. Yellow Sweet Clover



Botanical Name: *Melilotus officinalis*

Height: Up to 2.5 metres

Notes: The plant possesses aromatic yellow blooms and leaves typical of a clover. It grows in fields and on roadsides primarily. This species can also **fix nitrogen** in the soil, improving the soil's nutrient content over time.

10. Broad-Leaved Dock



Botanical Name: *Rumex obtusifolius*

Height: 50 – 130 cm

Notes: You'll find this plant in gardens and alongside hedges and roads. Its large green leaves are well-known for their ability to counteract Stinging Nettle stings. Unfortunately, this is just an **old wive's tale!**

11. Curly Dock



Botanical Name: *Rumex crispus*

Height: Up to 1.5 metres

Notes: Curly Dock gains its name from the shape of its leaves which curl at the edges. Apart from this distinctive trait, it resembles the Broad-Leaved Dock. It grows on roadsides, forest edges, and in meadows.

The **Black Cutworm moth** uses Curly Dock as a host plant, favouring its bottom leaves.

12. Yellow Foxtail



Botanical Name: *Setaria pumila*

Height: 30 – 95 cm

Notes: The name “Yellow Foxtail” was given because of the plant’s bristly flower spikelets, which resemble a yellow fox’s tail. It has hairless stems which tend to be green or purple. This plant grows on paths, roadsides, meadows and is a common lawn weed.

How to Contact the Editor

If you have comments or you know I have given wrong advice then please contact me by email at

info@yeovil-allotments-association.co.uk

If you have something to contribute or have a say on allotment life, then please use my email to send your contributions.

I am going to process the magazine issue once a month, so if there are comments you would like to make they can be answered in future editions.

I would like to add that most of the articles are taken off the web and some well known gardening and allotments magazines have been read in the making of our magazine content.

We also have our own website at :

www.yeovil-allotments-association.co.uk

where you can find this magazine as well as a catalogue

Happy Allotmenting and best wishes,

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