Hedgehog Glossary of Terms

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Anting

If you see your hedgehog spit saliva on her body and her quills, she is "anting." This is what hedgehogs do when they come in contact with a strange smell or food. This is also called "self annointing."

Bedding

Bedding refers to the aspen wood shavings, hay, or shredded newspaper that you should put in the bottom of your hedgehog's cage.

Cage

Your hedgehog will need to live in a cage. The best cages have smooth, high walls, so aquariums work great. You can use rabbit or ferret wire cages as well, but make sure to put down a piece of carpet to cover the wire floor and protect your hedgehog's sensitive feet.

Daily diet

A daily diet is what an animal must eat every day to stay healthy. Your hedgehog's daily diet includes:

- Hedgehog specific food
- 1 - 2 tsp of moist cat or dog food, cooked egg, or cooked meat
- 1/2 tsp of mixed fruits and vegetables

Exercise wheel

Exercise wheels help your hedgehog get enough exercise and stimulation in her cage. Make sure to choose a wheel with a solid surface or a wire mesh surface.

Food dish

Give your hedgehog food in a heavy, ceramic food dish.

Hedgie

This is another name for a hedgehog.

Hiss

This is a noise your hedgehog will make when she is upset.

Insectivore

An insectivore is a special kind of carnivore (meat-only eater) that eats mostly insects. Hedgehogs are insectivores.

Litter box

Some hedgehogs can be litter trained to go to the bathroom in a litter box.

Nest box

A nest box is a place where your hedgehog can sleep and play. You can use an actual wood or plastic box, or you can use pieces of PVC pipe.

Nocturnal

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Nocturnal means that an animal is awake mostly at night. Hedgehogs are nocturnal, and they need 12 hours of darkness followed by 12 hours of daylight.

Quills

"Quills" are the short, prickly spines that cover your hedgehog's back. They're actually hollow hairs.

Self-annointing

If you see your hedgehog spit saliva on her body and her quills, she is "self-annointing." This is what hedgehogs do when they come in contact with a strange smell or food. This is also referred to as "anting."

Tame

A "tame" hedgehog is one that is comfortable being handled by humans. To tame your hedgehog, first talk to her and give her treats. When she will allow you to without rolling up into a ball, put your hands on either side of her palm up. Then gently bring your hands together so you are cupping her in the palm of your hands and pick her up.

Toys

Hedgehogs love to explore, and good toys for hedgehogs include nest boxes, PVC pipes, solid rubber balls, Kong toys, and cardboard tubes.

Water bottle

Hedgehogs drink water out of a water bottle.

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