Thank you hedgie train drivers and crew!

Pet Hedgehog Food Pyramid

- Fruit (no grapes or raisins)
- Mealworms, crickets or silkworms
- Small amounts of cottage cheese & yogurt
- Poultry, eggs or fish especially salmon
- Omnivore or kitten kibble
Hi Everybody!

When the kids in my class heard about all the poor animals in Arlington, Texas, we felt really bad—especially when we heard that lots of them are hedgehogs just like us!! We asked our teacher what we could do to help. First we all donated things that we thought we would want if we had to stay in a big scary place with lots of other animals.

We collected stuff like toys, warm blankies and sleeping bags. I donated a flashlight too just in case there's another kid like me who is scared of...you know...um...the dark (Shhh!! Don't tell anybody!). I wrapped my flashlight in an old blankie so none of the other kids in my class would see it.

Our stuff filled a huge, big box. Everyone chipped in their allowance so we would have enough money to send it all the way to Texas. Then we made a big chart in our classroom so we could track how many days it took for our box to arrive. After we knew it had arrived, we tried to get back to normal. We tried to listen to our teacher, follow directions, learn stuff, and get along together. But it wasn't the same...everybody was worrying about the hedgie kids in Texas.

Then one day our teacher brought a great big envelope into our classroom. It was full of letters from Texas! There were enough letters for everyone in the class to get one. Now we get to be pen pals with those Texas hedgie kids!! Phoebe is the name of my pen pal. She wrote me a long, long letter and—guess what? She drew lots and lots of pictures to go with her letter and, not only that, she told me she's afraid of the dark too! She was really glad to get my flashlight! She said that for a long time she was stuck in a box with lots and lots of other hedgies. There were hedgehogs all around her and even some on top of her! It was really crowded and cold and dark and everyone was really, really hungry.

Then one day everyone was talking about something called an espeeseeyay coming. No one knew what an espeeseeyay was. Some thought it was a ferocious, hedgie-eating monster or maybe a really scary storm and others thought it might be some kind of food. Everyone was thinking a whole lot about food by then.

When Phoebe thought about monsters, all she could think of were the faces of the people who had packed her and the other hedgies into that huge box and then gone away without leaving them any food or water. She couldn't imagine that the espeeseeyay, whatever it was, could be a worse monster than those people!

And then all of a sudden a whole bunch of people came to the dark, cold, scary place where all the animals were crowded together. The people gathered up Phoebe and all the other animals and took them away. Phoebe was so scared she fainted.
But guess what? When Phoebe woke up she was in a nice roomy place with just a few other hedgie girls. It was warmer and they had water and blankets and lots of really yummy, yummy food! There were lots of people there but they weren’t scary like the monster people Phoebe knew before. These people were really, really nice.

The first day in the new place Phoebe had to take a bath! She had never had a bath before and she was scared. But it turned out to be nice (mostly) and it was warm! And then she got dried off in a cozy towel and someone stole her toenails. Phoebe thought about biting that someone but by then she was too cozy and warm to do it!

After that she had a nap while she waited for her turn to see the veterinarian. The vet weighed her and looked in her eyes and ears and tried to feel her tummy. Poor Phoebe felt kinda scared again but the vet was nice.

And then she had a meeting with the hedgie therapist. He was very kind and explained a lot of things to her and answered her questions and asked her about things that worried her or scared her. They even talked about being scared of the dark!

And then Phoebe met Jennifer, Anne, and Vicki, the really nice ladies from something called the Hedgehog Welfare Society. Auntie Jennifer kept the hedgie girls’ dorm clean, wrapped her in cozy blankets and talked to her in a really nice, gentle voice. She explained that Phoebe and the other animals would be staying in the dorm for a few weeks and then they would all take trains to foster homes and maybe forever homes. They promised Phoebe that the espeeseeyay and the Hedgehog Welfare Society would help her find a forever home where she could live happily ever after…just like in a fairytale! That’s when Phoebe figured out that the espeeseeyay was an organization and not a hedgie-eating monster! Then someone explained that it was really called the SPCA—the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Phoebe didn’t know what a society was but she did know one thing…it was way better than a monster!

I hope that I get to meet Phoebe some day. Maybe when she finds her forever home I can take the train to see her.

Love,

Alice
Hedgehog Trivia  

by Margaret Myhre

Egyptian Spiny Mouse

First discovered in Egypt in 1819, the Egyptian Spiny Mouse, *Acomys cahirinus*, is distributed through Africa and the Middle East. In the wild it lives in arid and semi-arid environments such as deserts and savannahs. It is generally found in rocky areas and has sometimes been known to occupy the burrows of other animals. Although it is generally terrestrial, some have been found in trees.

The body length of this mouse ranges from 7 to 17 centimeters. Weight is between 30 and 70 grams. Other characteristics include large ears, a gray to white belly, and a hairless, scaly tail that can be 5 to 12 centimeters in length. Of course, one of this animal’s most interesting characteristics is the spiny hairs that cover its back. These range in color from gray brown to a sandy tan. Although they are not as sharp as quills, the bristles scratch the throats of birds and other predators attempting to consume spiny mice. One experience like this is usually sufficient to discourage most from sampling a spiny mouse a second time!

Spiny mice are talented jumpers and are quite energetic. They are social animals who live in family groups with a dominant male. The females have small litters of two to four babies at a time. Other species of mice average ten to twelve babies per litter. Female spiny mice have been observed helping other females give birth and sometimes act as surrogate moms by nursing the babies of other females. Unlike other mouse babies, newborn spiny mice are not pink, blind or hairless.
Because spiny mice do not smell and have a good temperament, they are frequently kept as exotic pets. Like hedgehogs, they are often housed in glass tanks or aquariums with wire mesh lids. Bedding may be hay or other pet bedding products although cedar and pine shavings should be avoided. The mice chew up plastics very quickly so toys, food dishes and exercise wheels which are made of plastic should also be avoided. Cardboard nesting boxes are OK although they too will be chewed up very quickly.

Because they are so active, spiny mice need lots of food and water. The main source of nourishment for pet spiny mice is “lab blocks” -- small blocks of a processed kibble-style food designed for lab rats and engineered to be nutritionally balanced. Green lab blocks are intended for rabbits and guinea pigs and should not be given to spiny mice. This diet can be supplemented with berries, fruits, vegetables, cat or dog kibble, and grains—particularly oats. Sunflower seeds and nuts should not be offered to spiny mice. It is important to provide something hard to chew on such as dried bread. This helps to prevent rodent teeth from overgrowing. The water supply, usually kept in a bottle rather than a dish, should be changed daily.

Like hedgehogs, pet spiny mice need to be handled regularly especially when they are young. Until the animal is used to being held, it is important to keep both hands cupped around the mouse to prevent it from jumping down and injuring itself. The tails are very fragile and easily broken. Spiny mice should never be lifted by the tail and even holding on to the tail is dangerous for the animal.

Health issues for spiny mice include a tendency to get endoparasites (worming is recommended every six months), as well as susceptibility to colds, tail injuries and obesity. Older mice may have difficulties with over-grown teeth.


Every month, Maisey travels the world to find the latest and greatest in fashions for hedgies and is showcasing her finds here in Maisey's Costume Corner.

Send your pictures to hedgiemom@comcast.net

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Hedgies at the Olympics

Hedgie Kids Puzzle

Connect the dots in numerical order to find out what this hedgehog is doing. Use a ruler to keep your lines straight.