British Hedgehog Preservation Society Celebrates Hedgehog Awareness Week

Hedgehog Awareness Week is an annual event presented by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) to emphasize the problems faced by Britain’s shrinking hedgehog population and to offer suggestions on how these problems might be overcome. This year the event will take place from May 4th to May 11th. The focus will be on ways gardeners can help hedgehogs. The organization is offering simple suggestions to help make life easier for Britain’s struggling hedgehogs including the following:

- Ensure that hedgehogs have access to gardens by making a 5 inch square gap in fences or walls
- Check gardens and lawns carefully before mowing or trimming
- Before burning, move piles of rubbish to a new site to give hedgehogs an opportunity to escape
- Ensure that garden netting is kept at a safe height so hedgehogs do not become entangled
- Check compost heaps before digging in with a garden fork
- Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and poisons in the garden
- Cover drains or deep holes
- Provide hedgehog escape routes from ponds and pools

Fay Vass, Chief Executive of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, says: “There is so much the gardener can do to help hedgehogs, and with hedgehog numbers in decline it...
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The organization is also encouraging people to do something positive for hedgehogs during the week. Here are some of their ideas:

- **Organize a fund raising event such as a cake sale, morning coffee, or jumble sale.**
- **Display information on the plight of British hedgehogs in local schools, garden centers or libraries**
- **Contact local newspapers or radio stations and ask them to help hedgehogs by publishing letters or interviewing people from the BHPS organization**
- **Post leaflets in your neighborhood to let people know how they can help hedgehogs**

The British Hedgehog Preservation Society has posters, brochures and other informational materials available to support these suggestions. You can access these at the Society’s Internet homepage: [http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/)

The site also offers information about the organization, an application form for membership or donations, a hedgehog FAQ, a society news archive, and a rehabilitator’s section featuring advice on topics such as hoglet care, treating sick or injured hedgehogs, a fluid replacement chart, and information on ticks and worms.

A kids’ section features coloring pages as well as a *Letter from Spike* offering child-friendly advice on what to do if you find a hedgehog.

The society’s *Hogalogue* offers beautiful and unusual hedgehog items including books, cards, toys, and gifts as well as hedgehog care items. All profits generated from the *Hogalogue* go directly to supporting the work of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society.

BHPS headquarters are located at Hedgehog House in Duffstone, Ludlow, Shropshire, United Kingdom.

*A Hedgehog, before 1584. Hans Höffmann (German, ca. 1530–1591/92)*
Animal Planet Live! is now featuring a hedgehog! Several weeks ago, producers contacted Sheila and Murfi of Tru Chance Rescue & Rehab in Waldorf, Maryland, about putting a live action camera in one of their hedgehog cages to be featured on www.apl.tv. Their hedgehog, Peanut, had a test cam in his cage for about a month and responded well. The hedgehog live cam began broadcasting just before Easter. Although it’s not a paying gig for Peanut, Murfi has shared some extra mealies to make up for it. Links are on Sheila and Murfi’s website (www.murfiandsheila.com) as well as on the main website for the Hedgehog Welfare Society. Depending on popularity of the hedgehog webcam, a weekly chat may be added on down the road.

Although Peanut was getting his beauty sleep when we contacted Tru Chance Rescue & Rehab, a reporter from the HWS Newsletter was able to interview Sheila regarding Peanut’s history and new found fame.

Reporter: When did you first become interested in hedgehogs?

Sheila: In 2004 we had the opportunity to adopt a hedgehog through a “Pennysaver” ad. That is how we came to be acquainted with the Hedgehog Welfare Society. Asti ended up having WHS and through research we were introduced to the Society.

Reporter: How long have been involved with the Hedgehog Welfare Society?

Sheila: Since 2004 as a member and since 2005 as a rescue station. I served on the Board of Directors from 2006 – 2012 as Rescue Co-chair.

Reporter: How did you get into the hedgehog rescue and rehab business?

Sheila: Initially we just adopted a couple of hedgehogs then we were encouraged by Teresa Johnson, who lived in nearby Hollywood, Maryland at the time, to be a rescue station.

Reporter: What’s the story about Peanut, is he a rescue?

Sheila: Peanut was originally surrendered by a college age student who couldn’t have him in the dorm. He was slated to be up for adoption but when we were approached by Animal Planet Live about having a webcam in one of our habitats Murfi and I both thought of Peanut first because he is so reliable about coming out to wheel as soon as the lights go off in the hedgehog room. Currently the lights go out at 9 pm eastern and Peanut comes out almost immediately for his mealworms, food and wheeling.

What do you and Murfi do when you are not rescuing hedgehogs?

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Sheila: I work full time as an intake coordinator at a sleep lab. When I’m not working, I enjoy reading mysteries and suspense novels and do some light sewing. Murfi is home full time because she is disabled after breaking her back in 2000. She takes care of the animals (1 dog, 5 cats, 14 hedgehogs and 3 lesser tenrecs!) and the house and me – and I’m practically a full time job, LOL! When she feels up to it she also plays the guitar and sings. She is a composer and songwriter and in the past has opened on the big stage for Sha-na-na and John Anderson. She even got to do a couple of songs at a music festival that Garth Brooks headlined back when she lived in Arizona (pre-Sheila days).

View Peanut on the Hedgehog Cam at

http://www.apl.tv/hedgehogs.htm
Foot and Mouth Disease

Foot and mouth disease (FMD), also known as hoof and mouth disease, is a highly contagious viral disease which mainly affects livestock. Cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, water buffalo and reindeer are most susceptible. FMD can also infect animals in the wild including African buffalo, bison, elk, moose, chamois, giraffes, warthogs and deer. The disease is not limited to animals with cloven hooves. Armadillos, kangaroos, nutrias, capybaras, guinea pigs, rats, mice and hedgehogs are also susceptible. Human beings are not normally susceptible to FMD. Foot and mouth disease is not related to hand, foot and mouth disease, a condition only seen in humans.

Foot and mouth disease is found most frequently in South America, the Middle East, Africa and parts of Asia. North America, New Zealand, Australia, Greenland, Iceland and most of Europe are considered free of the disease. However occasional outbreaks do occur. The last outbreak in the United States took place in 1929. In 1991, the United States Department of Agriculture banned the importation of African hedgehogs to the United States to prevent the re-introduction of foot and mouth disease in this country.

This disease is easily transmitted from one animal to another. The FMD virus can be found in all excretions and secretions from acutely infected animals. This includes expired air, saliva, mucus, milk, urine, feces and semen. Symptoms of the disease include fever, shivering, drooling of saliva, and the formation of vesicles (blisters) on the feet, nose, in and around the mouth, on the tongue and on mammary glands. Blistering may also occur on the animal’s genitalia and on pressure points on the legs. The painful blisters rupture very easily and become erosions. The pain and discomfort from the eroded blisters causes additional symptoms including excessive salivation, anorexia, depression, lameness, and reluctance to move. Some animals suffering from FMD also develop inflammation of the heart muscle. Pregnant animals who come down with the disease usually spontaneously abort.

Most animals recover about two weeks after the onset of symptoms. However, secondary infections of the raw tissue may extend the recovery time. Mortality rates for mature animals are around five percent, while the mortality rate in young animals can be as high as fifty percent!

The FMD virus can be introduced via infected animals or contaminated food. For this reason importing animals and animal products from countries where FMD is found must be strictly controlled. Outbreaks are controlled by means of quarantines, movement restrictions, cleansing and disinfecting affected equipment, vehicles and premises, as well as euthanizing affected animals.

FMD infections in humans are rare. Approximately forty cases have been diagnosed since 1921. Therefore, foot and mouth dis-
ease is not regarded as a public health problem. When the disease does occur in humans it is mild, lasts a very short time and is usually resolved without special treatment.

Pets such as cats, dogs and rabbits are not normally at risk of infection with FMD unless the virus is actually injected into them. Horses do not get the disease.

It is important to remember that species which are susceptible to FMD, such as llamas, sheep, goats, cattle and even pigs may be kept as pets. These individuals are at risk of becoming infected with FMD and their owners should take strict precautions to protect them and monitor them carefully for any signs of disease. With the possible exception of pet pigs (pigs shedding much more virus than do other animals) a single pet susceptible animal (or even a small group of animals), kept isolated from domestic farm livestock, are unlikely to transmit disease to other animals even if they become infected.

Thoughts from the CVO: Learn the Hedgehog Heimlich!

By Deb Weaver

I wrote this article for the Jan/Feb 2010 newsletter the first time and it was reprinted in the Mar/Apr 2011 newsletter. I thought it was a good time to reprint it yet again. I feel it’s important to know how to do the Heimlich and breathing resuscitation for any family animal member. Here’s hoping none of us ever have to use this information.

A couple of years ago someone posted to the Yahoo! Hedgehog Welfare chat group that their hedgie had almost choked on something. The owner “fished” the item out with her finger. That got me to thinking.

A few weeks later I had Molly in to the vet for a checkup. Some of you may remember my Molly - - Miss Molly Dolly Snickerdoodles Sassy Pants Show Queen Permanent Grand Champion Weaver. When my vet said, “Any other questions?” my response was, “Yes, can you give a hedgehog the Heimlich maneuver?” My vet said, “Actually yes, and I’ll demonstrate with Molly.”

Here’s what my vet shared:

1. Take your hedgie and place him or her in the palm of your hand with the hedgehog’s belly against your palm and the nose pointing towards your fingertips.

2. Take your other hand and place it on top of your hedgie (the spine should be against your palm). Make sure you have a good grip on the hedgie.

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3. Now swing your arms up (like you were starting to make a golf swing) and then swing your arms quickly down.

4. When the hedgie’s head is pointing downward again, give a “good, solid” squeeze — like you were squeezing a bellows.

5. After the squeeze add an additional downward shake.

6. Repeat if needed.

I’m not sure what Molly thought of this entire ordeal (we spared her the squeeze part) but much to her credit she didn’t raise a quill. I’ve since practiced on stuffed animals from time to time so I won’t forget the
Why is This Night Different from All Other Nights?

Well, for one thing, it may be the first time a hedgehog has participated in a Passover seder.

This year Kiddo the Hedgehog attended a traditional Passover meal planned by his owener, Heidi Koch. He dined on matzah, a hard-boiled egg (traditionally dipped in salt water), fruit, and vegetables. He may have even had a taste of beef brisket or gefilte fish. It was worth balancing a hat on his quills to be able to participate in such a wonderful feast!

Thanks to Larry Thomason for bringing this photograph to our attention via Facebook and for contacting Heidi for permission to use this unique photograph.
Hedgehugs is a delightful new picture book created by the husband and wife team of Steve Wilson and Lucy Tapper. Steve has a background in children’s television and Lucy is an illustrator, artist and designer.

Hedgehugs is their first book for children. It features Horace and Hattie who are best friends. They enjoy doing many things together such as searching for four leaf clovers, making daisy chains, splashing in mud puddles and having tea parties by the river. But the one thing they cannot do together is HUG! They are too spiky!

Several times they tried to find a solution to their hugging problem:

In Winter, they rolled in the snow until it covered their quills – But the hug was too cold!

In Spring, they each squeezed into hollow logs, stood up and tried to hug—but the hug was too bumpy!

In Summer, they stuck strawberries on their quills—but the hug was too sticky!

In Autumn, they covered their quills in crunchy, crispy leaves—but the hug was too scratchy!

Then one day they came across something very interesting in a laundry basket near the clothesline — SOCKS!

Horace studied a sock carefully. He wasn’t sure what it was for...but it was very soft.

Finally he slipped a sock over his head. He struggled with it a bit and chewed a hole in the heel. That’s when he discovered the solution to the hug problem!

If he wiggled into the sock with his nose sticking out of the hole in the heel, the toe of the sock would fit over his head like a hood and the part of the sock that normally covers the ankle would fit over his body—covering the quills on his back!

Horace and Hattie quickly squeezed into socks, nibbled holes for their arms and faces, and looked at each other. They moved closer, ... and closer, ...and closer to each other until ...they HUGGED!

“The hug was just right.
Not cold, not scratchy, not sticky and not bumpy.
It was warm and soft and cuddly and comfy.
A perfect hedgehug!”

The Literary Hedgehog

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HWS Newsletter Plans Summer Sabbatical

The Hedgehog Welfare Society Board has declared a summer sabbatical for the newsletter. There will be no July/August issue this summer. The newsletter will resume publication in time for the September/October issue with content that focuses more on the activities of the Hedgehog Welfare Society. Stay tuned!

If you wish to contribute photos, art work, articles or other written content to the newsletter, please send it to

newsletter@hedgehogwelfare.org