

MAKE SPACE FOR WILDLIFE / PROJECT 03

Build a hedgehog house

A compact garden shelter with an internal passage and a removable roof.



A quiet place to nest

Make a wooden shelter for wild hedgehogs using one plywood sheet. A dividing wall separates the entrance from the sleeping area. This illustration shows the finished appearance; use the measured drawings to build it.

THE MATERIAL	THE ENTRANCE	THE FOOTPRINT
18 mm plywood	130 × 130 mm	500 × 400 mm body

01 / PREPARE

Your materials and cut list

All dimensions are finished sizes in millimetres. Check actual sheet thickness.

BUY THE RIGHT SHEET

One 1,220 × 1,220 × 18 mm sheet of untreated exterior-grade plywood. Exterior grade describes the glue bond; it does not mean preservative-treated. Avoid MDF, chipboard and wood of unknown treatment history.

PART	QTY	CUT SIZE IN MM
A Roof	1	560 × 460
B Floor	1	500 × 400
C Front (one piece)	1	500 × 250; cut 130 × 130 entrance
D Back	1	500 × 250
E + F Sides	2	364 × 250
G Divider	1	210 × 250
H Base runners	2	364 × 30
J Lid stops	2	270 × 20

Tools and fixings

Saw and straightedge, jigsaw, drill and bits, square, tape, clamps, sandpaper and eye protection. Use exterior screws: about 40 mm for wall joints and 30 mm for runners and lid stops. Pilot-drill and countersink; no tips should project inside.

Roof and ventilation

Allow about 1 m² of waterproof roof membrane and compatible fixings, two small exterior lid catches, and a short vent tube with roughly 25 mm clear bore. Size the drilled hole to the tube's actual outside diameter. Keep the tube end turned down outside.

02 / CUT

One sheet laid out

Mark each part with its letter before cutting. Keep the useful offcuts.



H1 + H2 RUNNERS 364 x 30
J1 + J2 LID STOPS 270 x 20

All parts 18 mm thick. Pale areas are retained offcuts.
5 mm cutting gaps shown. Measure finished parts, not the picture.

01 / SEPARATE THE ROWS

Cut bands 460, 250 and 250 mm deep, with 5 mm cutting gaps. C, D and G share the middle band. Trim the floor to 400 mm deep.

02 / CUT THE SMALL PARTS

Cut H and J beside E and F. Their lengths can suit available offcuts: support the base and keep lid stops clear of G. Clamp narrow strips securely; allow 5 mm cutting gaps.

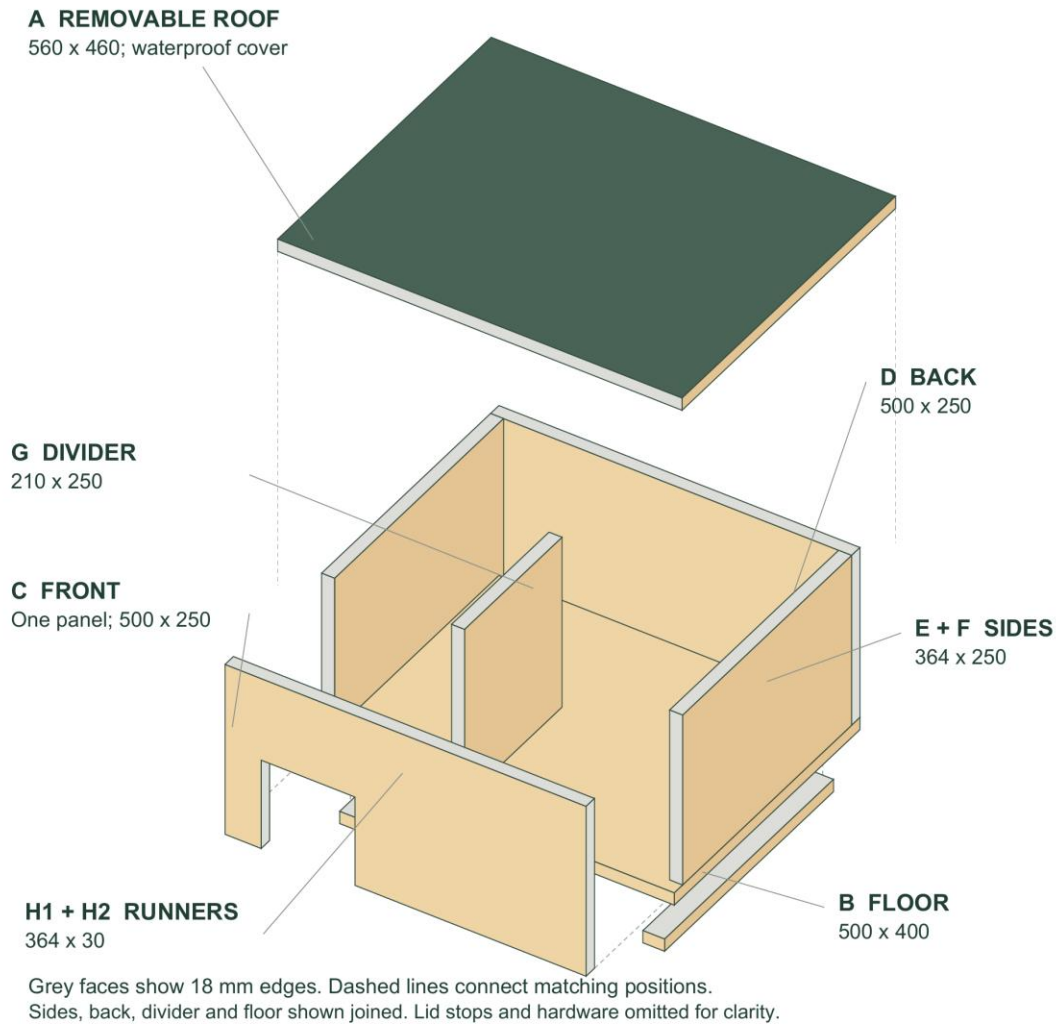
BEFORE ASSEMBLY

The dashed outline on C marks the entrance to cut out: 130 mm square, 50 mm from the outside left edge. See page 5 for dimensions. Smooth all edges and dry-fit the panels; changing the plywood thickness changes the joints and clearances.

03 / BUILD

Bring it together

Solid panels, visible edges and matching positions make the assembly easier to follow.



01 / BUILD ON THE FLOOR

Stand the walls on B, with E and F between C and D and the outer faces flush. At each corner, drive two spaced screws through C or D into the end of the side panel, centred on its 18 mm edge. Pilot-drill first. Do not add corner screws through the side faces. Screw B to the walls from underneath.

02 / ADD THE DIVIDER AND RUNNERS

Fit G against the inside of C, leaving 162 mm clear to the inside of the left wall. Screw through C and B into G. Fit H underneath, running front to back near each side; screw down through B.

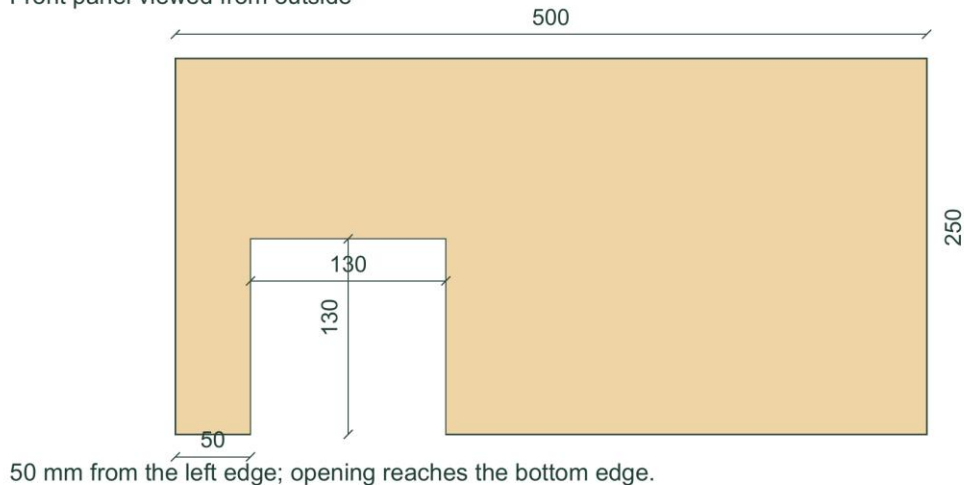
04 / DETAILS

The entrance and lid

Keep the passage clear and make the roof easy to remove when the house is empty.

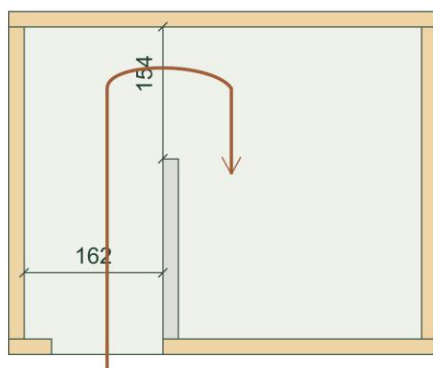
THE ENTRANCE

Front panel viewed from outside



THE ROUTE INSIDE

Roof removed; looking straight down



G DIVIDER

210 deep x 250 high

Keep 162 mm clear beside it and 154 mm behind its end.

Sleeping area

284 wide x 364 deep

Front is at the bottom of this view.

01 / VENTILATE THE BACK

Near the top of D, behind the sleeping area, drill to fit the vent tube. Secure it flush inside; turn the outer end down to shed rain. Keep both ends open and clear.

02 / FIT A REMOVABLE ROOF

Centre A for a 30 mm overhang on every side. Fit J beneath the lid, just inside the front and back walls of the sleeping area, clear of G. Leave 2 mm clearance to the walls. Use screws that cannot pierce the roof top.

03 / WEATHERPROOF IT

Cover A with one piece of waterproof membrane, wrapping its edges underneath. Follow its fixing instructions and let any adhesive fully cure. Fit two exterior catches to secure the lid while keeping it removable.

05 / ENJOY

Make it a quiet refuge

UK guidance for siting, bedding, finishes and care.

Choose the position

Put the house in shade, under cover and away from regular disturbance. Choose dry ground that does not flood, with the entrance sheltered from wind. Avoid a north or north-east facing entrance. Keep the ventilation outlet clear.

CHECK	BEFORE PUTTING IT OUT
Access	Keep a clear route into the garden and the house.
Entrance	Build a gentle firm soil approach to the floor level.
Bedding	Offer dry leaves or straw nearby; add a little inside.
Food and water	Keep these outside and away from the sleeping house.

Paint and oil

Leaving the wood untreated is the simplest choice. If using a finish, choose a water-based product whose manufacturer confirms suitability for hedgehog homes. Apply outside only and allow full curing. Keep the interior, entrance edges and bedding bare. Avoid creosote and solvent-based treatments. Use oil only with the same explicit confirmation; “natural” is not a safety guarantee.

Watch quietly and care for it

Do not lift the roof to check on a resident. If cleaning is needed, late March or early April can be suitable after winter use, but only when the house is unoccupied. A quiet entrance alone does not prove it is empty. If uncertain, leave it undisturbed. When empty, remove old bedding, scrub with hot water and allow it to dry.

GIVE IT TIME

A house cannot guarantee a resident. Keep leaf piles and sheltered garden corners too. Check the roof, catches and timber whenever the house is known to be empty.