

## Shortbread cookies

Hedgehogs are seen as a gardener's best friend as they often eat crop pests. Their favourite food to snack on is invertebrates like earthworms, caterpillars or even millipedes. Because of that you need to be careful of what you put on vegetables and plants. Pesticides and especially slug pellets can be extremely dangerous to hedgehogs.

More infrequently hedgehogs will eat bird's eggs, fallen fruit, or even some wild plants. They also use these plants when building their nests. A popular flower, which we often see as a pest, or even forget it's there as it grows in every little crack on a pavement is dandelions. Yet this flower has so many useful properties, in fact, you can use and eat all the parts of a dandelion. Our little hedgehog friends agree, which is why we are sharing a yummy dandelion shortbread recipe with you.

### Want to help hedgehogs?

Why not leave out a shallow dish with water and some good quality high protein dog or cat food.

Please remember that hedgehogs are lactose intolerant so please do not leave out any milk or cheeses. Leftovers may also not be appropriate as they may not have enough nutritional value or even make them sick!



### FUN FACTS!

There is a reason hedgehogs have the word 'hedge' in their name! It's one of the favourite habitats for these little hogs.

Like for many other animals hedges act as a safe passage between areas, connecting fragmented habitat, whilst also providing a food source. It is thought that one of the main reasons hedgehogs are in decline is due to their inaccessibility to habitat. Planting hedges and ensuring your garden has a 'hedgehog highway'\* can help to support them.

\*A hedgehog highway is a small hole (13 cm by 13 cm) made in fences that allows hedgehogs to freely move in and out between gardens. Have a look around your community? How connected is it? How easy is it for a hedgehog to move around?

## Dandelion Shortbread Cookies

### Ingredients

100 grams icing sugar  
100 grams cornflour  
200 grams plain flour  
200 grams unsalted butter  
1 tablespoon honey/dandelion honey\*  
6 yellow dandelion heads



### Method

Step one: Preheat the oven to 160°C/140°C Fan/gas mark 3/325°F.

Step two: Prepare the dandelion heads by removing the petals. Only use the yellow parts as the green bits are too bitter! (The best time to pick dandelions is during the day as they will be open)

Step three: Put all the dry ingredients into a food processor (the icing sugar, plain flour, and cornflour) and give them a quick mix before adding the butter, the honey, and the petals.

Step four: Process again until the mixture begins to stick and form into a ball. If you want to cut the shortbread into shapes using a cutter, first place the soft dough into the fridge for at least 30 minutes and then roll out between parchment paper to 1 cm thickness. Otherwise press the dough down into a square shape until it is 1 cm thick.

Step five: Using the tip of a sharp knife cut the pressed-out shortbread into fingers. If you are using a shape cutter, use that instead.

Step six: Use a fork to make little holes in each biscuit. This is done to allow steam to escape so the biscuits don't get trapped bubbles.

Step seven: Bake for about 20-25 minutes or until you see the edges of the shortbread getting a golden tint. As they are very crumbly either use a palette knife to move them to a wire rack, or wait a few minutes for them to cool down (we found we couldn't wait that long before we had to get a bite). You can sprinkle the cookies with sugar and leftover petals or leave them as is.

Storage: you can store these in a container or freeze them for later. That is if you can resist!

Tips: you can make this recipe by hand without a food processor. Let little ones dig in and mix it up, it works just as well.

\*Dandelion honey or dandelion jelly as it's often called, is made with dandelion petals. You'll find lots of recipes online.