LET'S TALK ABOUT

HILDA'S HOUSING

AN APH CARE GUIDE

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Enclosure

The recommended enclosure is a vivarium and it should be at least 4ft by 2ft in size. A good choice is a VivExotic Reptile Home Maxi Large based on floor space alone, however there are several makes of vivarium that are similarly suitable.

A zoozone2 is also a good enclosure, but only on a temporary basis, especially if you need to be portable with your hog. The reason they cannot be used permanently in the UK is because heat can escape easily from the wired lid. However, if using temporarily on holiday, you will need a Petnap heat pad with this type of enclosure. The correct one is a vinyl mat with a red covering. Ceramic heat emitters cannot be used with a zoozone. Reptile heat mats should not be used, these have been known to create some very serious burns on hogs.

Wire cages are not suitable. Hedgehogs are great climbers, not so great of getting down, tumbles lead to injuries. They also have been known to cause strangulation as the hog tries to escape between the bars. Indoor rabbit cages are also not suitable due to climbing.

Items for inside the enclosure

- **A ceramic heat emitter** - vivariums. Best position middle of viv, away from wall, facing downwards towards the floor. Ie) White Python
- **Lamp holder**
- **Lamp guard** (prevents burns - both to hog and surrounding items. I have seen plastic wheels melt and burn if too close to lamp)
- **Petnap heat pad** - zoozone2
- P**ulse thermostat** ie) Habitat pulse proportional thermostat (not the higher range one as temps too high for hogs)
- **Thermometer** ie) Exo Terra dial thermometer
- **Wheel** (see Wilbur's Wheels Album)
- **Hides/ Nest box** -can be wooden, can be fleece, can be plastic
- **Bedding/ substrate** - fleece liner bedding, puppy pads, paper absorbent bedding. Cardboard pellets and shredded paper both make good bedding and foraging choices. Popular choices for Pygmy hedgehogs include Finagard cardboard pellets and Carefresh shredded paper.
- **Toys** (See Ink's Entertainment Album)
- **Water bowl** - bottles not recommended as hogs tongues get stuck and have been known to be shredded
- **Food Bowl**

Enclosure Temperature

Hedgehogs need their enclosure to be kept between 21 - 25 degrees Celsius. The temperature should never drop below 18 degrees Celsius or rise above 28 degrees Celsius.

If a Pygmy hedgehog gets too cold, they may attempt to hibernate. This is very dangerous as hibernation can cause health problems including infection, dehydration and organ failure. See Harry's Hibernation Tips Album.

When to clean the enclosure

It is advised to spot clean daily and do a full clean and change of bedding etc weekly. This also keeps odours down to a minimum.

To keep the inside of the vivarium or house clean, you can use baby wipes to remove loose residue, and then F10 disinfectant to kill any germs.

Antibacterial spray can also be used. You can spray these around the vivarium, wiping down with paper towels.

White wine vinegar diluted with water is another cleaner.

To keep your hedgehog's wheel clean Safe4Pets disinfectant spray is recommended, hot water and washing up liquid, vinegar with lemon oil and water (the lemon will mask the smell of the vinegar) or F10 spray.

To wash bedding you should use a non biological powder. Avoid using fabric conditioner, as it prevents the bedding from absorbing liquid.

Where to position your enclosure

All enclosures should be kept out of direct sunlight. This is to prevent over heating and also to keep to a natural light cycle for the hogs, they need at least 12 hours daylight to maintain their sleeping patterns.

Poor bedding choices

Due to respiratory infections and eye irritation the following bedding should not be used :

- Wood shavings
- Saw dust
- Corn cob shavings
- Cedar shavings
- Pine shavings
- Towels / towelling - claws easily get snagged and can be torn off.

Don’t forget to invest in some door wedges or a vivarium lock . Hogs are great escape artists and are even better at hide and seek