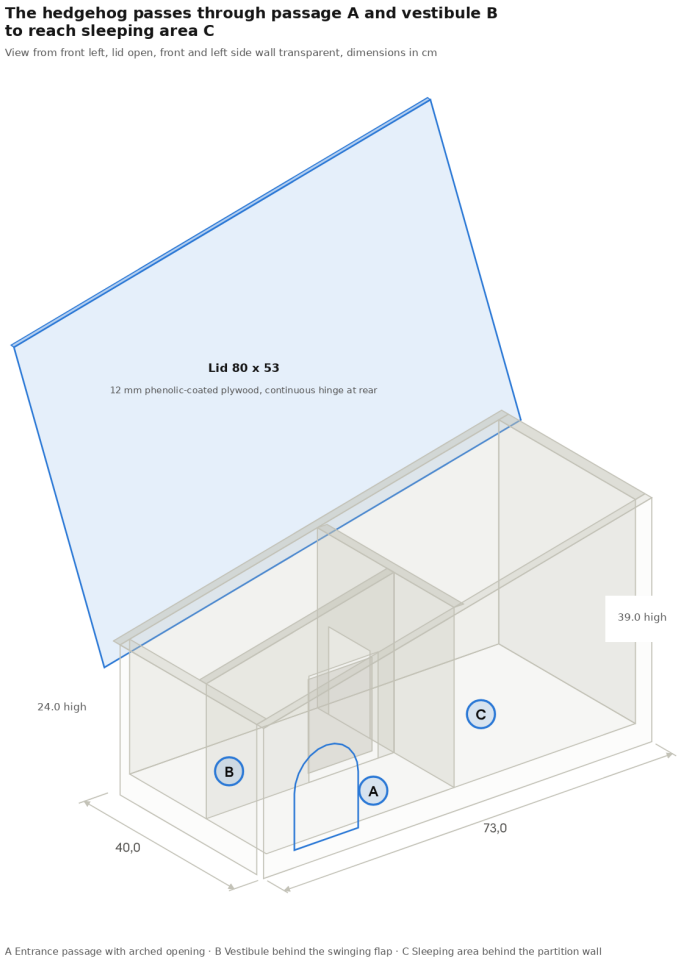
Building Instructions: Hedgehog Sleeping House

Updated: October 2026 · nistkasten-lindweiler.de

The House at a Glance

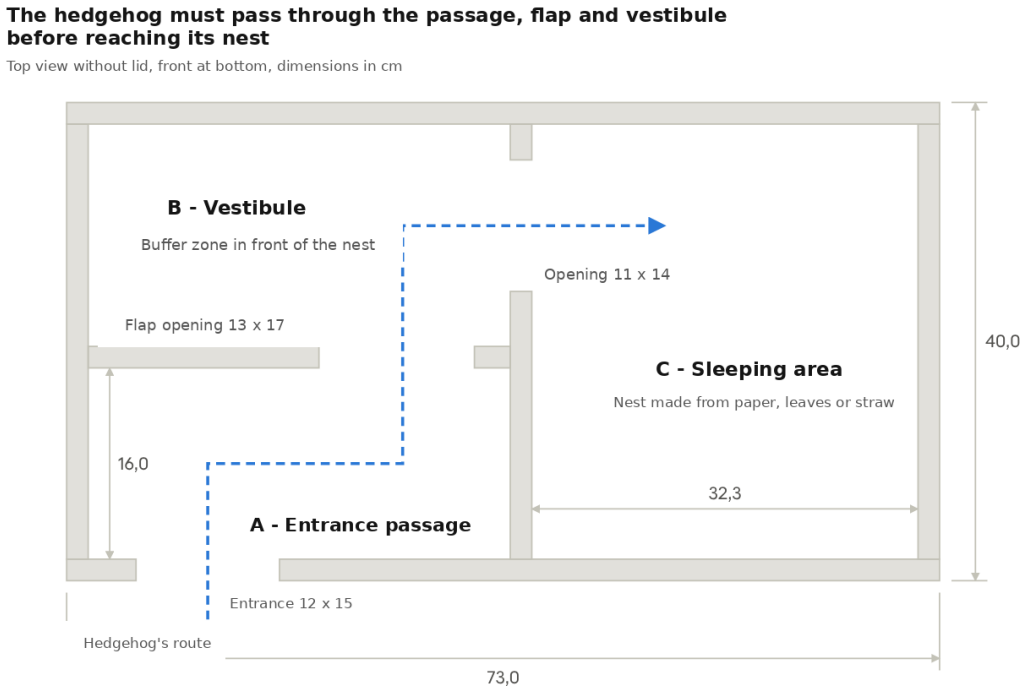
The hedgehog sleeping house is a wooden box with a footprint of 73 × 40 cm, 24 cm high on the left and 39 cm on the right, with a hinged lid measuring 80 × 53 cm. Because the side walls have different heights, the roof slopes down to the left so rainwater drains off naturally. Inside are three areas that the hedgehog passes through in sequence. The house is built from untreated timber: 18 mm for the walls and flap, 28 mm for the floor; the lid is made from 12 mm phenolic-coated plywood. If the panels are cut to size at a DIY store, the build takes roughly one afternoon (about 4 to 6 hours).



3D view · Hedgehog sleeping house with the lid open

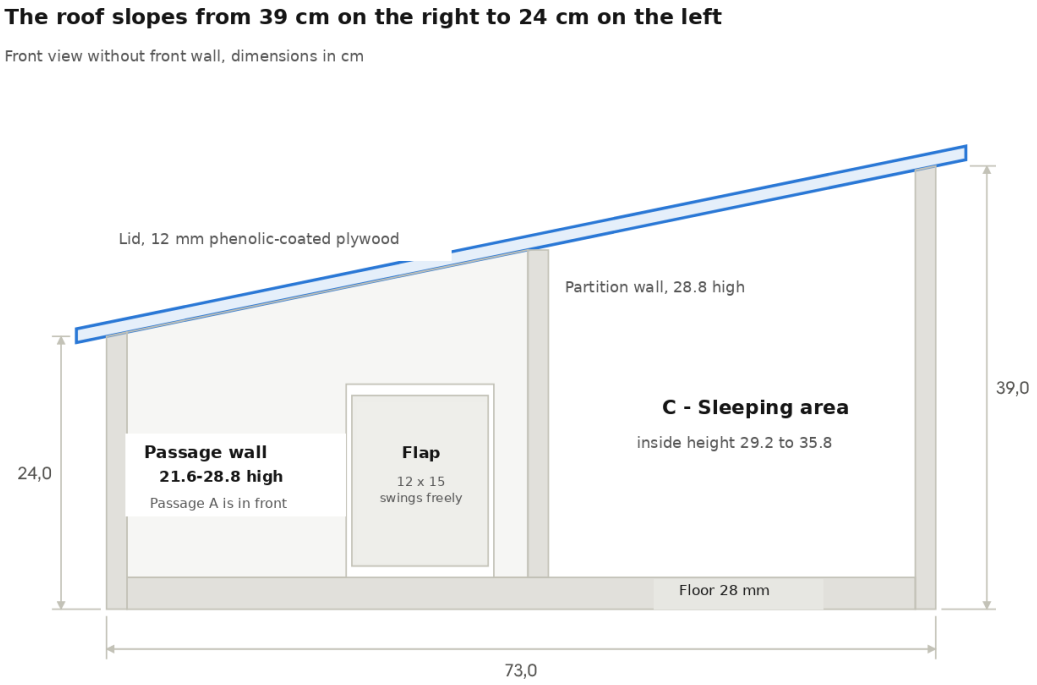
Area	Purpose	Clear dimensions (L × D × H)
A - Entrance passage	Protection against cats and rats: 12 × 15 cm arched entrance, followed by an angled passage closed at the top by the lid, plus a heavy flap made from 18 mm timber.	35.3 × 16.0 × 21.6 to 28.8 cm
B - Vestibule	Buffer between passage and sleeping area; keeps draughts and cold away from the nest.	35.3 × 18.6 × 21.6 to 28.8 cm
C - Sleeping area	Nest made from crumpled newspaper, dry leaves or straw.	32.3 × 36.4 × 29.2 to 35.8 cm

The hedgehog's route: through the entrance at the front left into the passage, along the passage to the right, through the flap into the vestibule, and from there through an 11 × 14 cm opening in the partition wall into the sleeping area. Cats are deterred by the narrow passage and its bend; the heavy flap makes entry more difficult for mice and rats.



Floor plan · Top view showing the hedgehog's route

The passage wall separates entrance passage A from vestibule B. Only after passing through the flap at the end of the passage and the opening in the partition wall does the hedgehog reach sleeping area C.



Front view · Roof slopes down to the left

The front and rear walls are trapezoidal; the lid rests on their sloping upper edges. The passage wall and partition wall stand on the floor and reach up to the lid; the passage wall follows the roof slope.

Materials and Tools

All timber remains untreated on the inside, as hedgehogs are sensitive to wood preservatives and paints.

Materials

- Untreated solid or laminated spruce or pine, 18 mm thick, for walls and flap: approx. 0.9 m² net area, around 1.1 m² allowing for waste.
- Untreated laminated spruce board, 28 mm thick, for the floor: 69.4 × 36.4 cm, for example cut from an 80 × 40 cm board.
- 12 mm phenolic-coated birch plywood for the lid: 80 × 53 cm; weather-resistant and dimensionally stable.
- Stainless or zinc-plated continuous hinge (piano hinge), approx. 70 cm long, with suitable screws. Screws into the lid should be no longer than 10 mm so they do not penetrate the 12 mm panel.
- 2 hinges (approx. 30 mm), stainless or zinc-plated, for the flap.
- 1 cabin hook to secure the lid.
- Approx. 50 stainless or zinc-plated wood screws, 4 × 45 mm.
- Optional: waterproof D3 wood glue.

Tools

- Jigsaw and cordless drill/driver.
- 3 mm wood drill bit for pre-drilling, 10 mm bit for starter and ventilation holes, plus a countersink bit.
- 120-grit sandpaper.
- Tape measure, try square, pencil and clamps.
- Brush and edge-sealing paint (or acrylic paint) for the cut edges of the phenolic-coated plywood.

Tip: Most DIY stores can cut the panels to the cutting list below with millimetre accuracy. That leaves only the openings to be cut at home.

Cutting List

The floor is made from 28 mm laminated timber for greater stability and better resistance to moisture from below; the lid is 12 mm phenolic-coated plywood; all other parts, including the flap, are 18 mm timber. The four outer walls surround the floor and are screwed to its edges from the side. Rainwater therefore runs down the outside of the walls rather than entering over a floor edge. The outer walls extend to the underside of the floor: the left side wall is 24 cm high, the right side wall 39 cm. The front and rear walls are trapezoids with a sloping upper edge, creating the roof slope to the left. The floor is smaller by the wall thicknesses (73.0 - 2 × 1.8 = 69.4 cm; 40.0 - 2 × 1.8 = 36.4 cm). The side walls sit between the front and rear walls. The interior walls stand on the floor and are therefore 2.8 cm lower than the outside height at the same position.

No.	Part	Qty.	Dimensions (cm)	Work required
1	Floor	1	69.4 × 36.4	28 mm thick; fits inside between the outer walls
2	Front wall	1	73.0 long; 24.0 high left, 39.0 right	Trapezoid with sloping upper edge; 12 × 15 cm arched entrance
3	Rear wall	1	73.0 long; 24.0 high left, 39.0 right	Trapezoid with sloping upper edge
4a	Left side wall	1	36.4 × 24.0	3 ventilation holes Ø 10 mm in the rear half
4b	Right side wall	1	36.4 × 39.0	3 ventilation holes Ø 10 mm
5	Partition wall	1	36.4 × 28.8	11 × 14 cm opening; stands on the floor
6	Passage wall	1	35.3 long; 21.6 high left, 28.8 right	Trapezoid with sloping upper edge; 13 × 17 cm flap opening; stands on the floor
7	Lid	1	80.0 × 53.0	12 mm phenolic-coated plywood; seal cut edges
8	Flap	1	12.0 × 15.0	18 mm like the walls; its weight makes entry harder for mice and rats

Position of the openings (flap opening and partition opening start at the lower edge of their wall; the entrance begins 2.8 cm above the lower edge, level with the top of the floor)

- Entrance in the front wall (2): 12 cm wide and 15 cm high, with a rounded top (radius 6 cm). The lower edge of the cut-out is 2.8 cm above the lower edge of the wall, level with the top of the floor. The left edge is 5.8 cm from the outside left edge of the front wall, leaving 4 cm inside to the side wall.
- Flap opening in the passage wall (6): 13 cm wide and 17 cm high; right edge 3 cm from the right-hand end of the passage wall, where it meets the partition wall.
- Opening in the partition wall (5): 11 cm wide and 14 cm high, with its edge 3 cm from the rear edge of the partition wall. It must be in the vestibule, not the passage.
- Ventilation in the side walls (4a, 4b): three 10 mm holes in each wall, 3 cm below the upper edge; on the left wall, place them in the rear half (vestibule B). The overhanging lid protects them from rain.

Step by Step

Pre-drill every screw hole with a 3 mm bit and countersink it so the timber does not split at the edges. Adding glue as well produces a tighter, more stable box.

1. Cut and sand. Cut all parts according to the cutting list and ease the edges with 120-grit sandpaper. Label the parts in pencil. On the front and rear walls, mark the sloping upper edge: 24 cm high on the left and 39 cm on the right, join the two points and cut along the line. Tip: both trapezoids can be made with a single diagonal cut from a 73 × 63.5 cm board (from 24 cm left to 39 cm right); simply turn the upper piece around. The passage wall also gets a sloping top edge: 21.6 cm on the left and 28.8 cm on the right.

2. Cut the openings. Mark the entrance, flap opening and partition opening as described above. The flap opening and partition opening start at the lower edge and can be cut upward with the jigsaw. The entrance is an enclosed cut-out: drill a 10 mm starter hole in one corner and cut from there; mark the rounded top beforehand with a compass or a suitable round object. Sand all cut edges thoroughly so the hedgehog cannot injure itself.

3. Drill the ventilation holes. Drill three 10 mm holes in each side wall, 3 cm below the top edge. On the left side wall, place them only in the rear half where the vestibule will be.

4. Screw the side walls to the floor. Place the floor flat on a level work surface. Position the low side wall (24 cm) on the left and the high wall (39 cm) on the right against the short floor edges, flush with the underside of the floor, and screw each wall into the floor edge from the outside with three screws. Because the floor determines the spacing, the distance and angle of the side walls are set automatically.

5. Attach the front and rear walls. Place both walls outside the long floor edges and the ends of the side walls, flush at the bottom and with the lower side on the left; the entrance must be at the front left. Screw into the floor edge at intervals of about 15 cm and use three screws into each side wall. The sloping upper edges must finish flush with the side walls. Rainwater then runs down the outside instead of over a floor edge into the interior. If desired, bevel the upper edges of the side walls by about 12° so the lid lies flat all around.

6. Install the partition wall. Position the partition so that exactly 32.3 cm of clear space remains between it and the inside of the right side wall; the opening is at the rear. Screw it through the front wall, rear wall and floor.

7. Fit the flap. This is easiest while the passage wall is still loose. Screw one leaf of each of the two hinges to the top edge of the flap and the other leaves to the side of the passage wall facing the vestibule, directly above the opening. The flap then hangs in the opening and can swing both ways, towards the vestibule and back into the passage. Leave about 5 mm clearance at each side and roughly 1 cm at the top and bottom. It must return to the vertical position by itself. Its weight is intentional: a hedgehog pushes it open with its snout, while mice and rats find entry more difficult.

8. Install the passage wall. Position the passage wall parallel to the front wall with 16 cm clear distance, running from the left side wall to the partition wall. The flap opening is on the right, at the end of the passage. Screw through the left side wall, partition wall and floor. Its sloping top edge closes against the lid, so the passage is sealed at the top and does not need a separate cover.

9. Make the lid. Cut the lid from 12 mm phenolic-coated plywood with the smooth film surface facing upward. The cut edges are the only unprotected areas: coat them twice with edge-sealing paint or acrylic paint so water cannot penetrate the wood. Roofing felt is not necessary.

10. Attach the lid. Position the lid with an overhang of 10 cm at the front, 3 cm at the rear and about 2.7 cm on each side, so rain drips off outside the walls. The lid lies on the slope, drains rain to the left and closes the passage at the top; it must therefore sit on the passage wall without a gap. Screw one leaf of the continuous hinge to the outside of the rear wall directly below its sloping upper edge and the other to the underside of the lid. The pivot then lies at the upper outside edge of the rear wall and the rear overhang swings outward when opened. Fit a cabin hook at the side as protection against wind, foxes and curious cats.

11. Protect the outside (optional). The outside surfaces can be treated with non-toxic linseed oil or a biocide-free wood stain. Leave the inside untreated and allow the house to air for a few days before putting it in place.

Setting Up, Furnishing and Care

A quiet, shady place under a hedge or shrub, with the entrance facing away from the prevailing weather, is the most important factor in encouraging hedgehogs to use the house.

Setting up

- Choose a quiet, semi-shaded corner of the garden, preferably under a hedge or shrub or close to a pile of leaves.
- Face the entrance east or south-east, away from the main weather direction (usually west in Germany).
- Place the box on two bricks or paving stones so the floor stays dry. The roof slopes down to the left; leave enough space there for water to drain away.
- Loosely arrange leaves and twigs around the house for camouflage and insulation.

Furnishing

- Vestibule (B): leave it empty. It lies between the passage and sleeping area and keeps draughts and cold away from the nest.
- Sleeping area (C): add crumpled newspaper, dry leaves or straw. Do not use hay, as it absorbs moisture and can become mouldy.
- Initial tip: prop the flap open for the first few weeks until the hedgehogs have accepted the house.

Care

- Do not open or disturb the sleeping area during hibernation, roughly from November to March.
- Once a year, in late summer before the new season, empty the entire house and clean it with hot water only, without detergents.