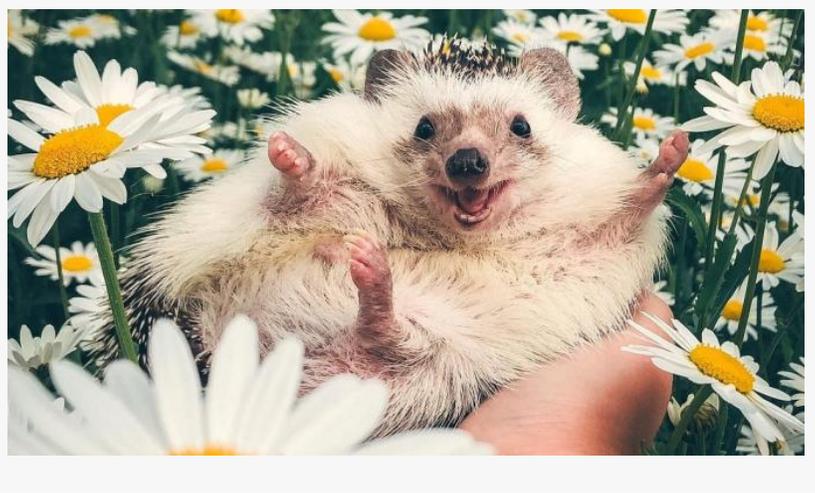


Precious and Poky: The Basics of Hedgehog Care From Exotic Animal Expert Thomas Harford Columbia

Pet Expert Tom Harford Columbia Shares What You Need to Know to Care For an African Pygmy Hedgehog

COLUMBIA, NY, UNITED STATES, August 1, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- So you want a pet hedgehog? With their pointed faces and snuffly noses, it is no doubt African pygmy hedgehogs have grown in popularity as exotic pets. However, hedgehogs have some particular needs that must be considered. [Thomas Harford Columbia](#), a science teacher with decades of experience caring for exotic animals, said it is critical to do research on owning a pet hedgehog before taking on the responsibility.



“Responsible, informed care is crucial when it comes to exotic pets,” [Tom Harford Columbia](#) said. He has owned several hedgehogs in the past and said they are some of the best pets he has had.

The first important factor in caring for a pet hedgehog is creating appropriate housing. Hedgehogs are active and need room to explore and entertain themselves. Hedgehogs are nocturnal, so provide them with a warm, dark place to hide and sleep during the day. Hedgehogs also need a running wheel to stay active and healthy. In addition, since hedgehogs are native to Africa, they can easily grow cold and hibernate, which can be fatal, so it is important to have a heat source like a heat lamp or heating pad, Thomas Harford Columbia advised.

Hedgehogs are relatively easy to feed unlike some other exotic pets, Tom Harford Columbia said. They can be fed low-fat cat food along with regular insects, fresh fruit, chicken and scrambled eggs as treats. Because of their diet and low maintenance care requirements, hedgehogs are relatively inexpensive to care for. However, purchasing your pet hedgehog can cost around \$200, Thomas Harford Columbia said.

[Thomas Harford Columbia recommends](#) using wood shavings for the bottom of a hedgehog’s cage. This is relatively easy to clean (cleaning the cage should be done at least once a week). Some people are able to litter train their hedgehogs to use a small litter box in the corner of the cage.

Hedgehogs will need baths at least once a month, which can be done in shallow water in the bathtub or sink with a gentle baby shampoo, Tom Harford Columbia advised. Take this opportunity to check your hedgehog for fleas or signs of illness. If your hedgehog is losing many of its quills, has a runny nose, has diarrhea or is lethargic, they may need a trip to the vet to

make sure they are healthy.

Finally, hedgehogs' personalities vary widely, said Thomas Harford Columbia. Some love being held, playing with other people and even cuddling. Others prefer to roll into a ball when people are around so they cannot be disturbed. If your hedgehog has the latter temperament, you can work on this, Tom Harford Columbia said. By socializing your hedgehog and spending time with it each day, most hedgehogs will get used to human interaction and become more comfortable with it.

A hedgehog can be a rewarding, fun and adorable pet for those who do the research and make sure to provide them a warm, cozy and comfortable home with plenty of mealworm treats, Thomas Harford Columbia said.

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