

# Rhubarb



## Species

African pygmy hedgehog – also known as the four-toed hedgehog (*Atelerix albiventris*)

## Habitat

Native to central and eastern Africa, but a domesticated breed in the UK.

## Care

Pygmy hedgehogs are smaller than English hedgehogs (a similar size to a Syrian hamster) and need special care. Rhubarb lives in a spacious 4.5ft vivarium, which is heated to a constant 24°C. He has a large wheel that he loves to run on and lots of toys. He comes out for regular play and foraging sessions where he hunts for insects in his dig box.

## Food

A mixture of live, wet and dry food. This includes things like insects, high protein biscuits, veggies and fruit.

## Characteristics

Rhubarb has quills along his top and a soft underbelly. He colour is called chocolate pinto. This means his quills are white and banded by dark brown with patches of pure white.

## Why we love Rhubarb

He's ridiculously cute and very loving. He likes to curl up on Clare's lap when she's watching TV and crawl up the inside of her jumper sleeve.

*Read Rhubarb's story on the next page...*

## Rhubarb's story

Rhubarb is one of Clare's few animals that hasn't been rescued or rehomed. She just couldn't resist his little face. He was brought from a reputable breeder and has been with Clare since he was 8 weeks old.



Bonding is crucial for pygmy hedgehogs and while he was a baby he spent every evening snuggled up on Clare's lap.

This was especially important during his quilling stage, which is when a hedgehog's baby spikes fall out and are replaced by adult ones. This is like toddler teething and it can make hedgehogs a little grumpy. Rhubarb liked to let everyone know this by huffing dramatically.

Rhubarb has now got all his adult quills and still enjoys lap time cuddles. But he also now likes doing big boy hedgehog things like perfecting his foraging skills and seeing how fast he can run on his wheel.



A little ball of cuteness, Rhubarb likes to greet people by slowly uncurling and popping his feet and arms out to wave hello. He loves coming out to shows to meet everyone and having his quills stroked and admired. But his favourite thing is when the children feed him mealworms, which he gulps down with gusto!

