

Hedgehog Bulb Pot

1771

Earthenware

English; Josiah Wedgwood

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The blue earthenware bulb pot is English made, and is designed to look like a hedgehog. The hedgehog's body and the tray below would hold soil; crocus or other bulbs would be planted and forced to bloom through the holes. The maker's mark evident on each of the two component pieces indicate it was made by Wedgwood in 1771. Josiah Wedgwood was the first potter of note to mark his goods with his own name unlike the easily copied potters' marks used by other manufacturers.

The Wedgwood factory was established in 1759 by Josiah Wedgwood, in Staffordshire, England and is still producing pottery today. Josiah Wedgwood is generally credited with the industrialization of the manufacture of pottery. He experimented with clay, and invented and produced three of the Wedgwood company's most recognized ceramic bodies: Queen's Ware (1762), Black Basalt (1768) and Jasper (1774). These remain popular to this day.

Wedgwood has a close association with the world's royal families and heads of state which began with Queen Charlotte of England, who ordered a set of cream-colored earthenware. She was so pleased with it that Josiah Wedgwood was granted permission to market himself as "Potter to Her Majesty" and to call his innovative cream ware "Queen's Ware."

A few years later, the Empress Catherine the Great of Russia ordered a service in Queen's Ware for fifty people, which consisted of 952 hand-painted pieces of gardens and English scenery. Today this service is kept in the Hermitage Museum, in St Petersburg. Wedgwood collections have been selected to grace the tables of British monarchs, the Vatican, the Kremlin and the White House.

Jasper, the most famous of Josiah's inventions, first appeared in 1774 after thousands of experiments. An unglazed vitreous fine stoneware, which was glasslike in appearance This type of stoneware was made in blue, green, lilac, yellow, black and white, and feature classical and contemporary reliefs, which are still made today from molds reproduced from the originals. The iconic light blue jasper gave rise to the expression "Wedgwood Blue" and remains a familiar Wedgwood signature worldwide.

This Wedgwood pot is Black Basalt, made from reddish-brown clay, which burned black in firing. It had a smooth surface, which was popular at the time We think that at some point it was painted "Wedgewood blue" to emphasize that it was made by Wedgewood.

Root or bulb pots were a popular product of the Wedgewood factory and catered to the growing interest in nature and gardens in the eighteenth century. Hedgehog bulb pots were described as porcupines for snowdrop, which was a type of bulb.

Josiah Wedgwood was also a prominent abolitionist. The highly recognizable cameo "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?", the seal for the *Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade* was created and produced by Wedgwood. Members of the Society of Friends, informally known as Quakers, were among the earliest leaders of the abolitionist movement in Britain and the Americas. By the beginning of the American Revolution, Quakers had moved from viewing slavery as a matter of individual conscience, to seeing the abolition of slavery as a Christian duty. Josiah Wedgewood, who was by then a member of the Society, produced the emblem as a jasper-ware cameo at his pottery factory