

GENERAL NOTES

- Before you buy decision making:
 1. Rabbits need free run time EVERY day.
 2. Rabbits will occasionally soil the floor and chew furniture during free run time.
 3. Rabbits cannot live outdoors all year round in Alberta, if the temperature drops below 15°C at night the rabbit must be brought inside or be in a weather proof enclosure with a heat lamp and straw.
 4. Rabbit cages are fairly large.
 5. Rabbits live 8+ years.
 6. Do you have other pets that might not be compatible?
 7. Daily interaction is required for a tame rabbit.
 8. Rabbits can be children's pets but will require adult assistance in care taking.
 9. Is anyone allergic?

- Rabbits will all get along up to about 3 months when they become sexually mature.
- Rabbits are sociable. Pairs will get along (make sure to neuter the buck as soon as possible), *does* will generally get along, so will bucks as long as they are neutered. Rabbits and Guinea pigs will also get along.
- Before you put any rabbits together with new rabbits or guinea pigs make sure to acclimatize them. This will be a minimum 2-3 week period and animals are not guaranteed to get along.
 1. Make sure both animals are used to their new home.
 2. Once they are both comfortable in their new home put the cages in the same room but not touching.
 3. Each day move the cages a little closer.
 4. Let the rabbits have separate free runs (supervised).

5. Once the rabbits are comfortable with each-other (not jumping up at the other's cage trying to bite it) then you can rub onion or garlic powder all over both animals, especially anal/groin regions to make them both smell alike.
6. Have a supervised free run together in a neutral area.

Special rule for Guinea pigs living with rabbits, make sure the Guinea pig has its own nest box which it can get into but the rabbit can't. Both animals will eat Guinea pig pellets (guinea pigs can't eat rabbit pellets because there is no Vitamin C added)

- What does a healthy rabbit look like?
 1. Coat smooth and glossy, no bald or scaly patches
 2. Eyes bright and clear
 3. Teeth should be aligned
 4. Clean ears, no deposits inside or discharge outside
 5. Dry nose
 6. Vent area clean and dry
- Always supervise children with pets.
- Never pet the rabbit under the chin or belly, you may pet the rabbit gently on the head, ears, and back.
- Important rules:
 1. Do not disturb the rabbit while it eats or sleeps.
 2. Adults are responsible for making sure it is taken care of.
 3. Loud noises will frighten rabbits.
 4. Always speak in a calm and gentle tone.
 5. To prevent injuries make sure to always pick up a rabbit properly.

HOUSING

- Cages must be tall enough for the rabbit to stand on its hind legs without its ears hitting the top.
- General rule is 4 square feet per rabbit.
- High floor pan (8+ inches).
- Metal bars are preferred.
- Have a nest box/hutch.
- Glazed stoneware is preferred for food dish.
- Water dispenser minimum 1 pint.
- Hay rack must always be full.
- Bedding: straw or shavings. Spruce, Pine, Shredded Aspen, Corn Cob work best.
 - Never use newspaper (ink can make rabbit sick), Cedar (can cause respiratory problems)
- Litter box with cat litter.
- Rabbits prefer cooler conditions (15-22°C)
- Never place the cage near a heater or in direct sunlight.
- Never place the cage in a noisy area (near the tv, loud pet birds, or high traffic areas)

- Litter training: the rabbit will generally go in the same area of the cage, put soiled bedding in the litter box and the rabbit will learn to go there.

EXERCISE

- Outdoor play areas must be caged and covered with a screen or wire mesh. Rabbits like to dig so a wire mesh is required for the ground if unsupervised. Make sure there is shade for the rabbits and a hutch to hide in, along with fresh water.
- Free run time should be done after the rabbit is tame and trusted. Always leave the cage open so it can retreat into it if it feels threatened. Place a

litter pan in every room it is allowed to enter and do the same steps for litter training. Slowly give them more and more space to explore. If you can't supervise you can set up an indoor play area with a pen.

GROOMING

- Rabbits should be brushed weekly. Using a soft bristle or pin brush.
- If the rabbit has a hairball you can use Papaya fruit plus or a cat hairball remedy.
- Rabbits nails should be cut as soon as they begin to curve down. Cut 1/8 inch past the quick at a 90° angle, if the nail is dark put a flashlight under it so you can see where it is.
- If the nail is cut too short and starts bleeding a blood stopper powder can be used (make sure the bleeding has stopped before leaving the rabbit).
- Teeth grow continuously and need to be trimmed by a vet. Providing lots of chew toys will help in maintenance.

NUTRITION

1. Feeding should be on a routine, preferably twice a day. Morning: dry food (pellets), evening: greens and fresh foods. Fruits can be given in small amounts for treats.
2. Fresh foods should only be given to mature rabbits and only in very small amounts.
3. Hay and fresh water should always be available.
4. Variety is good but never make any sudden changes in the diet.

CLEANING

- The cage should be cleaned at least once a week.
- Remove all contents from the cage, spray down with an enzyme based cleaner, let it sit 30-60 seconds and then wipe down very well.
- Any cage attachments should also be cleaned at this time. If there is a litter box this should be cleaned out and the litter should be replaced.
- Place fresh bedding, food, water, and any attachments back in the cage. Food and water should be checked daily.