

## "My rabbits just get dried food, hay and veggie leftovers from the kitchen".

Rabbits in nature nourish themselves from a diverse range of vegetation. Based on their short domestication history, pet rabbits still have this nutritional dependency. In captivity, every day they need, as much green food as they can eat (grassland plants, vegetable greens, leaf vegetables, herbs), combined with a mixture of dried herbs, fresh branches and leaves of trees, fresh veggies, as well as, water from a stable ceramic bowl and continuously available, premium quality hay. Finally to complete this diet, a few sunflower seeds, linseeds and pumpkin seeds along with dried herbs ,can be given to add as a healthy alternative to dried food. The energy content of commercial dried food is very high, this causes obesity, harms the rabbit's organs (as a consequence thereof emaciation), causes dental diseases and fosters molar abscesses and creates abnormal behavior. In addition, the ingredients are grinded and baked together then finally pressed so that there are no longer any long fibers present which every rabbit needs for a healthy digestive system. The consequences out of malnutrition such as this with dried food, are many and varied diseases, for example, insufficient dental abrasion (due to the food lacking structure and because the rabbit becomes too quickly satiated, therefore not chewing a sufficient length of time), bladder stones and other efferent urinary organs (due to too less water content) and gastrointestinal disorder (diarrhea, bloating, constipation, fresh food intolerance, hair balls... ). However fresh food has to be introduced very slowly and in small amounts ,which you slowly increase over time. For the beginning carrots, celery, apple, dandelion are appropriate.



## "Rabbits are low maintenance, cheap, perfect animals for kids and they don't become old."

Actually rabbits live on average longer than a Great Dane, need to be taken care of daily and cleaned regularly! They cause costs that are not to be underestimated. Their care is not easy, it requires a lot of knowledge to detect the inconspicuous symptoms of sickness, to cut their claws, to feed them appropriately and to introduce them with other rabbits. They are hardly suitable for kids because they do not like to be picked up, this makes them thrash around and they scratch. It takes time and patience to domesticate a rabbit. However as a family pet, children can learn how to correctly handle a rabbit under guidance.

### Species Appropriate Rabbit Care



Don't have a solitary rabbit.



Don't keep your rabbits a in cage



Don't keep your rabbits a in hutch



Don't feed your rabbits dried food.



Don't use a water bottle.



Don't grasp them by the neck.



# Step by Step into a Happy Life



## The Most Common Mistakes In Having Rabbits

By Viola Schillinger

Here you'll find everything you need to know about rabbits!

[www.kaninchenwiese.de](http://www.kaninchenwiese.de)

## "But I have a large cage / hutch "

If you look at the pet store, you will see there is different cage and hutch models . Unfortunately, with all of these cages/hutches, even the largest is too small. You can only use it as a toilet, quarantine cage or permanently opened retreat. Rabbits unfortunately are unlucky in that if they are seen as a "cage animal", nobody would lock any other animal in a cage, for example, like a dog or a cat. This approach is not suitable for rabbits too. Rabbits need, each day and night, several square meters of ground space to move. Animal welfare organizations recommend at least a 6m<sup>2</sup> permanent ground space for one to three rabbits .

## "My rabbit gets a run outside if it's nice weather, if I have time or if I'm at home."

Rabbits are active very early in the morning around four o'clock and late evening, but they also have activity phases again during the rest of the day and night. They don't sleep throughout the night, like us humans and need space when they are active, not only the times when the weather is good or when it's suitable for the owner. No one would keep a dog in a cage just because he sleeps so much anyway and on occasion gets a run. Provide your rabbit day and night a permanent outlet to run which they can enter whenever they want. By the way, outdoor living rabbits may play also in the snow and rain on the lawn, so long as they can get to their protective shelter at all times.



## "My rabbit is incompatible / aggressive. "

There are many causes that lead to rabbits not getting along with each other. One of the most common is that the rabbits wrongly were introduced to each other or were separated too fast from each other. Rabbits are territorial, that is why when you want to introduce new rabbits to each other, you have to put them both out of the existing rabbit territory and into a new area. For rabbits to become accustomed to each other they have to clear the hierarchy out of their used territory (chasing, mating, fighting). This behavior is totally normal, please under no circumstances interfere. If after some days it has settled, you can return the rabbits to the used territory. The best way to keep rabbits is to keep a couple, a castrated male together with a female, same sex rabbits are often incompatible. However there are potentially many other reasons, e.g. if one of the rabbits has a hidden disease. Inform yourself about the procedure of the socialization and get help with the introduction if you think your rabbit is incompatible.

## "My rabbit needs no water or receives water from a water bottle. "

Unfortunately, the idea that rabbits do not require water is still a persistent rumor if they are fed fresh food. This is wrong and it is animal cruelty if the rabbit is not able to quench its thirst. As a suitable water dispenser, you use a stable ceramic bowl, that is elevated on an area without litter, and is cleaned daily. Water bottles are unsuitable because they supply their water drop by drop, therefore the rabbit is scarcely able to quench its thirst.

## " I deal a lot with my Rabbits and it has a guinea pig friend."

Even if you spend intensively 4 hours a day with your rabbit, it is still 20 hours alone and lonely for the rest of the day. This makes up then 600 lonely hours per month and 57,600 in a whole rabbit's life . Even the best care and devotion cannot replace another rabbit. Guinea pigs and rabbits are therefore "lonely together ". Imagine in your whole life you never get to know any other humans, just a dog. A rabbit always need at least one other rabbit to cuddle, explore the world and for its own self- well - being. In Austria and Switzerland it has already been prohibited by law to keep a single rabbit.



Flat Enclosure



Balcony Enclosure



Garden Enclosure