

SHOPPING LIST

- ✗ information leaflet about rabbits
- large cage
- nest box
- heavy feeding bowl
- hayrack
- water bottle
- floor covering (e.g. MultiFit straw pellets + straw)
- hay (rich in herbs, dry, dust-free)
- dried herbs
- prepared rabbit food (premium food)
- mineral stone, salt lick
- vitamin supplements
- intestinal conditioner (for the prevention of diarrhoea)
- snack ball
- wood for gnawing on (e.g. wooden gnawing block, wicker bridge)
- nibble sticks
- rabbit brush
- triangular toilet
- disinfectant/detergent for the cage
- cage cleaning materials
- enclosed run in the garden with a net cover
- book about rabbits

For more tips and further information on rabbits visit our website at: www.maxizoo.ie

HOW I SHOULD BE HANDLED?

Approach the animal slowly from the front and talk to it gently at eye level, without touching it. Hold out something healthy for it to nibble and you will quickly succeed in gaining the trust of this cute little animal. It comes up close to your hand voluntarily and out of curiosity and it will nibble from the proffered snack. Depending on the individual animal it can take days if not weeks to progress from hand feeding to delicate stroking to taking it out of its cage and letting it run around freely. Do bear in mind that each animal has its own unique personality and no two dwarf rabbits will ever behave or act in exactly the same way. Time and again, you will come across individual animals who are more aggressive by nature and who simply cannot be tamed.

Picking up and carrying is difficult. This is achieved easily with animals who have already become accustomed to human beings and hands. Stretch out your hand towards the rabbit carefully and gently from the front, stroke its ears and grab the fur at the top of its back.

Your grip must be neither too firm nor too loose, but sufficient for the rabbit not to be able to struggle free. As you are picking it up you must make sure that the other hand is supporting its hindquarters. (Never pick up a rabbit by the ears or without supporting its hindquarters!). With the correct handling its little body relaxes in your arms or on your lap. The hand that is doing the



lifting should always rest on the back of the neck to prevent the rabbit from jumping down, since falls from even the lowest of heights can be very dangerous. Children should only practise picking up and carrying their pet under parental supervision or under the guidance of Maxi zoo staff when making the purchase.

DO I LIKE COMPANY?

Rabbits are social creatures that live together in colonies in their natural environment. For this reason they feel much better in themselves when kept in groups rather than on their own.

It is easiest to put together groups of animals that have been with each other from a young age. The males must be castrated before they reach sexual maturity otherwise there will be undesired litters or fights breaking out between males. It is difficult to integrate older animals with one another and will only work in a neutral cage or enclosure.

Because rabbits and guinea pigs behave differently they do not make ideal companions.



My rabbit

Everything you need to know about dwarf rabbits as pets



Everything for your pet

www.maxizoo.ie

AM I THE RIGHT PET FOR YOU?

Their cute appearance, miniature size and above all, friendly demeanour make rabbits ideal pets. However, our joy and fervour for these cuddly little animals should not blind us to the fact that they are animals given to flight. For this reason, it is recommended that children are supervised when they spend time with them. When rabbits are thrown into a panic they try to flee and can hurt themselves or even scratch and bite in the process.

WHERE DO I ORIGINATE FROM?

I originate from the European wild rabbit and am extremely different from my relatives, the hares. Rabbits have been bred by humans for a very long time now and there are many different varieties in many different colours.



WHERE'S THE BEST PLACE FOR ME TO LIVE?

Rabbits are very active and need as much space as is available. Therefore, the cage should naturally be as big as possible, too. Planed wood shavings or straw pellets are ideal for covering the



HEALTH CHECKLIST

My rabbit is healthy if:

- its eyes are not weepy or inflamed,
- there are no visible bite anomalies (e.g. the incisors are too long), and the rabbit is able to chew normally,
- it has a dry nose and doesn't sneeze,
- the coat is smooth and shiny and smells of fresh hay or straw,
- the area around the anus is clean and free of encrustations,
- the soles of its feet are neither encrusted nor heavily stained with urine, the claws are not too long,
- the little bob tail is pointing straight up,
- no lumps or swellings can be felt,
- it is lively and has a healthy appetite.



floor of the enclosure. Cat litter must not be used. A nest box and, if possible, a raised surface for lying on (e.g. a little house with a flat roof) as well as a heavy food bowl are very important. A rodent drip feed bottle is the best way of supplying water.

However, it is also important to let them run around the house every day because this prevents them from becoming fat and unwell. But great care must be taken to ensure that they don't have the opportunity to nibble on electric cables, poisonous plants or anything else unsuitable.

If they are being kept outside it is imperative that the rabbit is protected from the sun and rain, and in the winter a nest box that is insulated on all sides (that means the base, too) must be provided.

It goes without saying that the cage should always be kept clean, since droppings, urine and stale food don't just smell unpleasant to human beings, but can also damage the animal's delicate lungs and make it really ill. A triangular rabbit toilet can make the removal of daily droppings and urine less of a burden.

WHAT DO I LIKE TO EAT?

Rabbits are herbivores so fresh hay and herbs should form the basis of their diet and fresh and clean supplies must always be available in the cage. On top of this, one tablespoon of prepared food (pellets) per rabbit per day can also be given. The main diet is supplemented by a moderate supply of fresh food (e.g. carrots, dandelions, apples etc.)

Branches from fruit trees, willow, hazel nuts or special wooden gnawing blocks can be put in the enclosure for playing with and also to wear down the front teeth that continue to grow throughout the animal's life. It is extremely important to ensure that there is always enough drinking water available.



One of the rabbit's normal behavioural traits is to eat the droppings.

Absorption of what is known as "blind gut droppings" is a very important part of the rabbit's vitamin supply.

The wrong type of foods, for example silage, foods high in sugar and starch, cabbage leaves and sudden changes in diet, can lead to potentially fatal intestinal malfunctions. It is essential that fresh grass is introduced to the animal's diet very slowly in spring. Sudden changes in diet are to be avoided at all costs. Directly after purchasing your rabbit, any changes of diet should be avoided for the first 2-3 weeks as well, so make sure you ask exactly what the rabbit has been given to eat so far.



KEEP ME FIT AND HEALTHY

To ensure that you have lasting fun with your rabbit, you must check it daily to make sure that it is healthy and well (see check list). If the rabbit is showing any signs of illness it must be taken to a vet as quickly as possible.

Rabbits should be vaccinated against myxomatosis and RHD in the spring.

Flies like to lay their eggs on rabbits in the summer, especially if the anus is smeared with excrement. The newly-emerged maggots then feed on it very quickly and even creep under the skin and this can also result in the death of your pet. It is therefore important to keep an eye on and clean the coat regularly.