



## NYC METRO RABBIT NEWS JULY 2024

### All About Hay

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

As rabbit parents, one of the first things we learn is the basic philosophy about feeding hay.

- It is the most important part of your rabbit's diet.
- Hay consumption is necessary to maintain the health of your rabbit's gastrointestinal tract.
- The fiber in the hay is the fuel that supports good peristalsis in the rabbit's gut.
- Lack of fiber in the diet is one of the most common causes of gastrointestinal stasis.
- Hay is crucial for rabbits' dental health. The grinding motion used to chew hay keeps their open-rooted teeth worn down to a healthy length.
- Different textures of hay are necessary for the maintenance of their teeth.
- Grass hay should represent 80%+ of a rabbit's diet.
- Generally speaking, your rabbit should eat an amount of hay at least the size of his body every day.

Most rabbit caretakers know these vital facts, but that is not where your knowledge of hay should begin and end. There is so much more to know about

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Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Foraging!

### Tips for Traveling With Rabbits in a Carrier

By Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

Traveling with rabbits can be a stressful experience, but actions can be taken to mitigate as many of these stressful factors as possible before you leave, during the trip, and once you arrive at your destination. Ensuring both comfort and safety throughout the journey is paramount. Familiarize yourself with these eight carrier travel tips and plan ahead to make the trip go as smoothly as possible for a safe and comfortable journey.

#### 1. Choose a hard carrier

A hard carrier offers better protection for your rabbit during travel. It is more durable and provides a sturdy barrier against any unforeseen accidents or impacts, or even any potential danger from other animals at a veterinary clinic. The rigid floor better maintains its shape for the bunny to stand on, and the top or sides cannot sag and make contact with the bunny inside. The latches and doors of a well-made hard carrier are typically more secure than the zippers and Velcro of a soft carrier, and some determined rabbits have even been known to gradually chew their way through soft carriers. Hard carriers are also much easier to clean and sanitize,

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## Rabbits in a Carrier

(Continued from page 1)

ensuring a hygienic environment for each trip. Their smooth surfaces can be wiped down and disinfected effectively with rabbit-safe products, and are less likely to absorb odors or harbor bacteria.

### 2. Choose a carrier with a top door

A carrier with a top door allows easier access to your rabbit once you arrive at your destination. At the vet, this design minimizes stress during entry and exit so the rabbit will not need to be coaxed or pulled through a front door. Generally, rabbits will happily return to the carrier on their own at the end of their exam, so depending on the circumstance, you or your veterinary team may only need to lift the rabbit through the top door at the start of your appointment. Once you return home, the top door should remain closed and the whole carrier placed in the bunny's pen with the front door opened for the bunny to come out in her own time.

### 3. Provide adequate ventilation

Proper ventilation is crucial to prevent overheating and to ensure your rabbit gets enough fresh air. Carriers with multiple air holes or side vents facilitate better airflow, helping to keep your rabbit cool and comfortable. Many two-door carriers have top doors made entirely of metal grating to provide better ventilation. It's not uncommon for rabbits to urinate in the carrier, so adequate airflow is also a must for their very sensitive respiratory systems. In the car, make sure air is circulating well but not pointed directly into the carrier.

### 4. Size the carrier properly

Although it can be tempting to provide your rabbit with as much space as possible, a carrier that is too spacious is a hazard in the event of unexpected, sudden movements that cause rabbits to lose their balance or fall. A smaller carrier means that a rabbit can only travel a



Our favorite top-opening carriers. We've found these top openings to be the largest available.



Outfitted with oversized, thick plush beds.

short distance before reaching the wall of the carrier in the event of an accident. Choose the smallest size that still allows your rabbit enough space to comfortably turn around and lie down.

If you are traveling with two rabbits, they can share a larger carrier as long as they have enough space to move around each other comfortably. Of course, only travel with multiple rabbits in a carrier if they are fully bonded.

### 5. Pad the carrier

Soft padding on the bottom of the carrier creates a comfortable surface for your rabbit to sit on and reduces the impact of bumps or jolts in the car. Ensure that the bottommost layer is something nonslip on the plastic carrier floor. A section of newspaper between the carrier floor and a towel or bed can add some friction to prevent slipping around. A good tip is to size the towel or bed so that it stretches a bit up the sides of the carrier and acts as a bolster to help keep the bunny safe and give him something soft to lean against for extra stability.



This carrier lacks a top door, which made getting a feisty bunny in and out of it more difficult.

### 6. Avoid hay and food in the carrier

Rabbits generally will not want to eat or drink while traveling in their carrier anyway, so keep hay (which can scratch rabbits' eyes) or other foods out of the carrier in transit and leave the space uncluttered. Instead, pack your rabbit's favorite foods and greens separately so they can be offered when you reach your destination.

### 7. Control vehicle climate

Travel with a lightweight covering for the top of the carrier to prevent direct sunlight from entering, which can overheat or bother your rabbit. This also provides a sense of security by creating a dimmer, more enclosed environment, reducing stress. Rabbits are very sensitive to overheating. Especially when traveling during hot summer months, maintain a cool temperature in your vehicle with good air circulation.

### 8. Monitor your rabbit during travel

Regularly check on your rabbit to ensure he or she is comfortable and not exhibiting signs of distress. If your rabbit shows signs of overheating, excessive stress or other health concerns, take appropriate action to address the issue immediately.

## Hay

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hay and its great significance in your rabbit's life.

We are not hay experts by any stretch of the imagination, but over the past several decades, we've been committed to understanding the critical role that hay plays in the lives of our beloved rabbits. We find ourselves talking about hay with rabbit parents daily and we're quite surprised to find that elemental details about hay are unknown to most of them.

Here are a few basic concepts that should be included in your daily considerations. They will help you appreciate the important particulars about hay in order to apply the above philosophy more effectively.

### Basic #1 fact: Cuttings

Hay is generally categorized as first, second and third – or coarse, medium and soft cutting.

Many hay farmers harvest their hay more than once during a growing season. The first harvest results in a coarse hay, comprised of more stems and few “leaves.” This is called first-cutting hay. Once harvested, the first time, the hay is allowed to grow to maturity again, for a second time. This “new” growth is then harvested and is

Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab



Appropriately filled box of hay.

called second-cutting hay. It is generally softer, with more leaves and fewer stems that are usually more tender. Some farmers will then allow the hay to grow to maturity a third time. This is referred to as the third cutting. It is the most tender harvest, comprised of mostly leaves with little to no stems.

As rabbit guardians, it is our desire for our rabbits to eat the more fibrous, first-cutting hay. First cutting offers the highest fiber content, which boosts the GI tract and grinds rabbits' teeth more efficiently. Although some rabbits will enjoy first cutting and eat massive amounts of it, it is unfortunate that

many don't prefer first-cutting hay. The vast majority of rabbits like second cutting more than first cutting. Since we need our rabbits to eat large amounts of hay, it is best to give them what they will consume readily and consistently. So for most, second-cutting is the way to go.

If your rabbit will eat both the first and second cutting, give them both! You get the benefit of higher fiber from the first cutting AND the huge consumption volume from the second cutting.

ALL rabbits enjoy third-cutting hay. As stated, the third cutting is much softer

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## You Can Help!

We desperately need help driving our rabbits to and from the veterinarian, between foster homes, etc. Having to worry about how the rabbits will get to the vet or back home is adding a huge amount of stress on top of our already difficult mission.

Most of our foster rabbits are quite far from their veterinarian and we now have a huge problem on our hands, as one volunteer can't help any longer. Unfortunately, many trips can be last-minute due to an emergency.

If you are based close to Westchester County, are a safe driver with a clean driver's license, and want to help the rabbits in a huge way, we'd love to hear from you!

Thank you!

[NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:NYC.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

## Hay

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and less fibrous. Therefore, it should be reserved for older rabbits, those with dental issues (acute or chronic), those having chronic illnesses, rabbits recovering from illness or surgery, and those who truly will not eat first or second cutting. Giving it to younger, healthier rabbits will cause them to turn their nose up at the more beneficial, fibrous counterparts. Never assume that your rabbit is so picky that he'll only eat a third-cutting hay, unless you've tried a plethora of different hay types and brands, which will be discussed below.

### **Basic #2 fact: Rabbits' preference**

There are different varieties of grass hays that our rabbits can eat. For purposes of this article, we'll stick to the most popular types, which are timothy and orchard grass. You've probably noticed that there are many purveyors of grass hays in the U.S., and farmers are growing hay all around the country. The texture and taste of hay is reliant on where it is grown. The makeup of the soil and the weather influence the crops dramatically.

If you traveled around the country with a bag of timothy or orchard seeds and planted some on every coast and everywhere in between, you would be very surprised at your harvest. Each hay crop will look, smell and taste differently based on what area of the country you planted it in. It will also have different nutritional values based on the makeup of the soil in which it was grown. All of this matters to your rabbit and will affect whether he likes it, and if so, to what level. Knowing which hays your rabbit loves is critically important. He will get no benefit from hay that he doesn't eat or eats little of. To that end, it is imperative to give your bunny many different brands, cuttings and types of hay to try. Be sure to offer each separately from the others so you may identify which types he loves. Then,

always have those stocked at home. Give your bunny several varieties of the chosen hays daily. Why so many? Your rabbit needs the healthy impact that each of those hays has to offer, as in fiber content, texture, taste and mineral content. Just like us, rabbits prefer an interesting variety of things to eat. When a wide selection is available, they eat more.

Hay is a natural crop and its quality is dependent on many factors that are beyond human control. Sometimes, the shipment of your rabbit's favorite hay is different from the last shipment and he won't eat it. This is the time to pat yourself on the back for having on hand the other three, four or five kinds that he loves. Not being prepared in this way could end in disaster. Your rabbit could go into GI stasis while he waits for you to scramble to find hay that he's willing to eat.

It is common for a rabbit to decide that he just doesn't like a particular hay anymore. Eventually, he eats little or none of it. You won't have the time needed to find a new hay that he likes immediately. If you don't have a selection of other favorites at the ready, you will have a big problem on your hands.

### **Basic #3 fact: Quality**

Since hay is naturally produced, it will never be exactly the same from harvest to harvest or crop to crop. If the hay smells foul or is moist to the touch, do not feed it to your rabbit. If there are leaves or sticks or the stray deceased grasshopper, discard them before feeding your rabbit. But, if the hay colors vary from what you are used to or you see "brown" pieces in it, that doesn't mean the hay is bad. There are natural variations in color, texture, stem heft, etc., that do not make the hay "bad." Whether or not the hay is "bad" because of color variations, or texture, is up to your rabbit.

Buying hay online from a hay purveyor is always better than buying the smaller bagged hay from your local brick-and-mortar store. There is no telling how fresh the bagged hay is. It lacks the



Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab  
Some bunnies aren't the greatest hay eaters, and they need encouragement.

fragrance from a direct shipment and the per-pound price can be very expensive.

### **Basic #4 fact: Quantity**

Easy! The more, the better! Fill up your rabbit's litter box with hay; fill toys, tubes, boxes, hay "stands," paper bags; and make random piles for your rabbit to forage through and enjoy. As we know, rabbits are meticulously clean animals, but hay is messy. If you want to have a great life with your rabbit, accept the hay mess and let him live! Once you've had the heartbreaking experience of your bunny having a health issue that thwarts his hay eating, you will happily encourage him by having lots of hay, everywhere.

After you learn which brands and types of hay your rabbit prefers, buy it in large quantities. The more you buy, the less expensive it is and you avoid the risk of running out. When you buy hay in bulk directly from a hay purveyor, you will receive a beautifully fresh product.

Depending on where you live, stores like Agway will have bales of timothy hay. If you can store a bale (inside, dry and cool), the price is right and the rabbits love it. Make sure you ask for a second cutting of timothy hay and be clear that it is for rabbits. Bales of hay

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## Hay

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for horses usually have alfalfa in them, which you don't want.

### Basic #5 fact: Variety

It is the spice of life! Adult rabbits should eat grass hay, not legume hay, like alfalfa. The most common and widely available are timothy and orchard. Other types of acceptable grasses are brome, Bermuda, mountain grass, oat, rye, etc. Try them all! The variety will cause him to eat more hay, his teeth will benefit from different textures, and he will avoid the boredom from eating the same thing all day, every day. Some brands will offer the same kind of hay but will add things to it, like flower petals or herbs. Beware: if your rabbit doesn't enjoy the plain variety, he won't eat the "spiked" hay either. He will merely pick the flowers out and call it a day. That's not what you want.

If your rabbit doesn't eat A LOT of a particular brand, buy a different brand. For instance, some rabbits prefer eastern timothy over western and vice versa. Therefore, a brand that only sells western timothy hay will be refused by an eastern timothy hay-loving rabbit.

The most effective material you can give your rabbit to keep his teeth ground

down is a variety of hay textures. People often give rabbits wood or other substances to chew, but they are not the safest options. You run the risk of wood (and other hard materials) splintering in the rabbit's mouth and causing serious health consequences. Some of those toys and "chewables" have pesticides, glues and other noxious additives that aren't disclosed to the consumer.

### Basic #6 fact: Consistency

Since we know that different types of hay look, smell and taste differently, be consistent with your purchases. Once your rabbit tells you what he prefers, do NOT run out. If you do, you will have to run to a pet shop and your options will be limited. You will spend a lot of money and likely purchase hays that your rabbit won't eat. A gastrointestinal slowdown from a lack of fiber or the start of overgrown molars can happen extremely quickly.

With many rabbits, you cannot just substitute with an unknown hay in a pinch. If your rabbit doesn't like it, the quantity of hay he might eat will plummet. Once you have your rabbit's base established, you should continue to try new hay as often as you like. We are careful not to switch pellets brands or add

new greens indiscriminately because of the risk of GI upset. However, this risk does not exist with hay. Your rabbit's health will never be adversely affected by new or different types of hay.

### Basic #7 fact: Foraging

This is defined as "searching for food that is safe and grazing for what is palatable to eat out in nature." Inherently, rabbits are foragers. They are hard-wired to eat this way, just as their wild ancestors did. Foraging is an instinctual activity for rabbits. In the wild, rabbits would forage in a variety of grasses. Hay is just the dried form of those grasses that we can offer in the home environment. Foraging is mentally stimulating and physically necessary. In a great big pile of hay, rabbits will forage for the most desirable pieces first. They continue until all of the acceptable pieces have been consumed. Once they've foraged through the pile, they may not eat another strand from it. Leaving that pile for extended periods will not "convince" your rabbit to eat it. He may choose to go without hay instead, which is a very dangerous prospect. Fresh hay is always necessary.

How we fulfill our rabbit's need to forage, indoors, is by using a very large litter box and filling it up to the TOP with hay. This allows the rabbit to forage across the box and down into the hay.

There is no better sight (and sound) than a bunny jumping into and munching away on a big, freshly filled box of hay. When you've had a bunny who has struggled with dental issues, you celebrate these moments. A packed box of hay has a great added benefit for rabbits. The "buoyant" feeling of densely piled hay is a relief for their feet. A thick yet flexible substrate is the best surface to take pressure off their delicate hocks.

It seems that once a week someone has designed a cool-looking hay "rack" or "feeder" or a new-fangled litter box. Please beware. Putting hay ONLY into a

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Photo: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

Toy made of hay; stuffed with hay.

## Hay

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rack, etc., denies your rabbit the ability to forage. If the hay that is “accessible” from the feeder is not appealing to your rabbit, he will give up and move on. Your rabbit will eat only a fraction of the hay that he would eat in a big box filled with 6-plus inches of fresh, high-quality hay. By all means, use racks and feeders as additional sources of hay amongst many, but never as the sole source. Be mindful that hay must always be very accessible to your rabbit. Avoid “hiding” the litter box inside of furniture, etc. Make sure other sources of hay are not so tightly packed into a feeder and the like, that your rabbit is forced to work very hard to get hay. Be very aware that as your rabbit gets older, it will become difficult for him to jump into very high litter boxes, climb to reach “hidden” litter boxes, or work to get hay from racks, etc.

Often, we provide boarding services. Frequently, rabbits come to us producing

low quantity and small fecal pellets. Usually, we learn that at home, the rabbit is offered only one or two types of hay. Invariably, the caretaker will contact us to say how large, plentiful and healthy-looking the bunny’s poop is after his stay with us. It’s not surprising, because we give their rabbit a large variety of fresh hay, every day. AND we give rabbits the ability to forage. Luckily, these caretakers will take heed and follow better feeding instructions. In many cases, they attribute their rabbit’s better GI health to the dramatic increase in hay consumption after they’ve made the changes.

### **Basic #8 fact: Investment**

There are so many cute products we may be tempted to buy for our rabbits. Much of the time the rabbit has little interest in stuff the humans are spending money on. Some rabbit caretakers tend to buy everything they see on social media whether it’s a good choice for their rabbit or not. If you have unlimited resources, by all means, (as long as the

items are safe), indulge! If you live on a budget, spend your money on the many different brands, cuttings and types of hay instead. This will make your rabbit happy, enrich his life and benefit his health. If he loves a new hay, add it to his rotation. Hay that is (or might be!) spoiled should be disposed of promptly. Hay that is offered should be refreshed often. A rabbit will likely not eat hay that appears clean, yet has been sitting in his area for a week. Some people resist disposing of that apparently “clean” hay. They feel it is being “wasted” and are reluctant to refresh the hay as often as they should. In the grand scheme of things, it is mere pennies that you are discarding. If your rabbit is not eating it, it is because he has finished foraging through it or he might have urinated on it, so throw it away. You are doing your rabbit a disservice by keeping it around. By spending your money on a wide variety of good quality hay, you are investing in your rabbit’s health and happiness and he will be grateful for your efforts!

Do you really know how much hay your rabbit is eating? It is well worth an investment of your time to find out. Just because you see him eating hay, this doesn’t mean he is eating enough or with the necessary fervor. Having a good understanding of your rabbit and his hay activity will allow you to make changes and improvements more effectively. The benefit to your rabbit’s health will be a great reward for your time and attention.

We hope that you now have a better appreciation for the significance of abundant, good quality, varied and fresh hay. We have fingers crossed that your rabbit is always a great hay eater and remains that way. Please feel free to contact us for recommendations, advice or further discussion on this critical topic.

Photo: Jane O'Wyett



The more hay, the better!

# An Incomplete History of the Rabbit

By Robert Kulka

Velveteen, Peter, Easter, Bugs, Roger, Thumper and Br'er. All these names for rabbits originate in modern times, although the rabbit has had a place in ancient history right up to today.

This is an incomplete history presented in no specific order or timeline. What you will find here are some interesting tidbits about the rabbit dating back before humans evolved.

Starting with modern-day examples, on Aug. 4, 1959 the Trix Rabbit debuted in a simple line-drawn commercial titled "Rabbit and Carrot" drawn by Joe Harris. Unlike typical rabbits, the Trix Rabbit preferred the fruit flavor of Trix to carrots. In 2016 Joe Harris died, but his Trix Rabbit became part of rabbit history.

Tales of Br'er Rabbit (short for Brother Rabbit) can be traced back to the storytelling traditions in West, Central and Southern Africa. The Temne people of Sierra Leone told children about the adventures of a talking rabbit. It has been suggested that in his American incarnation, Br'er Rabbit represented enslaved Africans who used their wits to overcome adversity and made him a folk hero.

In China, the rabbit was among the 12 animals that raced to the Jade Emperor in a cosmic contest to determine their order in zodiac signs. Though he was a weak swimmer, the rabbit used his brain, opting to cross the river portion of the course on a raft. The rabbit is the fourth animal in the Chinese zodiac and symbolizes mercy, elegance, beauty and good luck.

Rabbits are often associated with the moon. In ancient times the Chinese believed there was a rabbit who lived on the moon (known as the Jade or Moon Rabbit). The rabbit was the closest companion to the immortal Moon Goddess, and it would sit with her, making medicine by grinding herbs with a mortar and pestle.



Disney's Thumper.



The original Trix Rabbit.

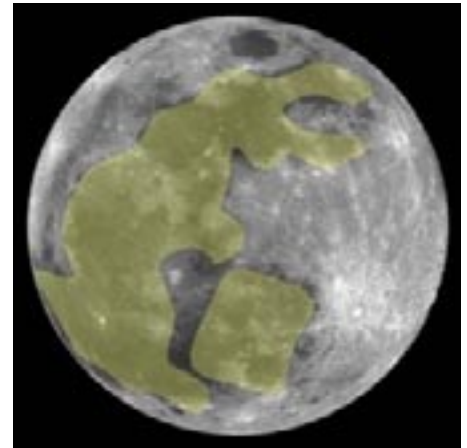
Chinese mythology also includes the Legend of the Tu'er Ye, known as the rabbit god. The story tells of an epidemic in North China that had no known cure. The Moon Goddess sent her rabbit to earth to treat the disease. However, the rabbit was white, and the color white was associated with death. The rabbit was not permitted to enter houses to treat the disease and so he borrowed outfits of the saints as he helped people recover. He was revered for his healing powers.

Rabbits belong to the order of mammals called Lagomorpha. Fossil records suggest rabbits evolved in Asia at least 40 million years ago. The break-up of continents may be responsible for the wide distribution of rabbits and hares around the world. The European wild rabbit evolved around 4,000 years ago on the Iberian Peninsula. The name "Hispania" (Spain) is sometimes translated from a name given to that area by Phoenician merchants, meaning "land of the rabbits."

The European rabbit continued to be introduced to new countries, and breeds



Br'er Rabbit.



The Moon Rabbit from Chinese mythology.

can be traced back several centuries. A breed known as Lapin de Nicard once existed in France, weighing as little as 3½ pounds. Some consider this to be the forerunner of dwarf breeds. By the 20th century, breeds such as the Himalayan and Rex came about as the result of naturally occurring genetic mutations.

The Easter Bunny, or Osterhase, was introduced to the U.S. by Germans who arrived in the Pennsylvania Dutch settlements during the 18th century.

After World War II, rabbits became more commonplace in the home. There was a greater understanding of rabbit intelligence, personality and behavior, and rabbits were increasingly popular as companion animals.

There have been plenty of misconceptions and misbeliefs. For instance, Bugs Bunny was given carrots to eat because Clark Gable ate a carrot in the film "It Happened One Night." The bunny's spoof of Clark Gable became so popular

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# Cottontail Connections: Tidings From Cottontail Cottage and Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

By Briggitte Dix  
Director, Cottontail Cottage  
Wildlife Rehab

## Saving wildlife starts at home.

As a wildlife rehabber, I've come to realize even the smallest gardens can contribute in meaningful ways to our native landscape. Many people view wildlife as intruders, invaders and pests, but it certainly doesn't have to be that way. Native animals play a very important part in maintaining a healthy, biodiverse environment and many people find great joy in observing them in their gardens.

On our rehab hotline we receive calls daily from homeowners who have inadvertently orphaned or injured wildlife because they are unaware of their presence. Making a few small changes can prevent issues and have a big impact on our local species that so often struggle to survive.

- Delay trimming trees and hedges until fall or winter to prevent displacing birds, squirrels and other small mammals that are nesting with babies.
- Check your yard before mowing or weed whacking for what looks like dead patches. They may be concealing nests of baby bunnies.
- Be aware that piles of brush are attractive nesting sites for wildlife. Before burning or removing brush piles, be sure to carefully check that no babies are inside or underneath.
- Skip pesticides: They poison the food wildlife eat and feed their babies.
- Add native plants and flowers that feed, host and provide vital habitat.



Wild rabbits' fur coloring helps them blend into their environment, making it especially important to search the ground before mowing. Pip was orphaned at a few days old. He was raised by the rehabber at Cottontail Cottage. This photo was taken on the day of his release back into the wild with 26 of his rabbit friends.



Sunny is a juvenile eastern cottontail. She is a survivor of a weed whacker who injured her and several of her siblings. Sunny was brought to Cottontail Cottage Wildlife Rehab for care and is almost ready for her release back into the wild.



Mini, shown here when she was 11 days old, is an eastern cottontail rabbit being raised at Cottontail Cottage Wildlife Rehab. Her mother was killed by a lawnmower.

## Want to explore this topic more? Some of my favorite books on this are:

“The Humane Gardener: Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife,”  
by Nancy Lawson

“The Wildlife-Friendly Vegetable Gardener: How to Grow Food in Harmony with Nature,”  
by Tammi Hartung.

## Be a hero for injured and orphaned wildlife.

- Download Animal Help Now onto your phone. This free app connects the public with licensed wildlife rehabbers nearby.
- Support your local wildlife rehabbers. They are funded 100% by donations and always need volunteers. Consider reaching out and seeing how you can help with the important work they are doing.



# A Couch Fit for a Bunny: Selecting Furniture With Our Furry Friends in Mind

By Megan Hilands

Until just a few months ago, I would tell anyone who listened that the couches in my living room were older than I was. I had repurposed a matching brown loveseat and sofa, a set that my father originally purchased in the '80s and that was definitely built to last. I was proud that I had been able to get so much use out of pieces that would have otherwise taken up space in a landfill.

It had become increasingly clear in recent years, though, that the furniture had outlived its lifespan. It was harder and harder to get out of the seats as the cushions had degraded and no longer offered any firmness. It was also for this reason (I assume) that my bunnies did not seem to like the furniture – the unstable surface likely didn't offer them as much security as the floor.

As with any other decision in our home, when it came time to decide on new furniture I really thought about how it would affect my bunnies. As such I had criteria for suitable replacements that might be a bit different from what's standard. Here are some of the considerations that led me to select furniture

best for both the humans and bunnies in the household.

## Built to last

Given my proclivity toward saving old furniture, you probably guessed that I didn't want to replace my set every few years. This was also something important to consider for my bunnies as well, because something as big as a furniture purchase is quite disruptive to bunnies. Moving and assembling furniture makes noise, and then your bunnies need to adjust to huge new objects that probably smell and feel different than what they are used to. Indeed my timid bunny Simba took a few weeks to come near the new couch and loveseat. She gave the new furniture a very wide berth until she was confident nothing bad would happen if she went near it.

## Pet-friendly materials

If there's one thing I know about bunnies, it's that those little nails and teeth can do quite a lot of damage in a short amount of time! Mine also seem to shed a lot, especially in the summer, no matter how diligent I am with grooming. For these reasons, I wanted to make

sure the furniture I selected wouldn't immediately be damaged after my bunnies jumped and "burrowed" on it with their claws. Ideally, it would also not easily collect stray fur and could be easily cleaned.

Fortunately, these days there are several lines of furniture with pet- or kid-friendly fabric that is meant to hold up to more wear and tear than usual. Some are even treated to be stain-resistant. Many companies also offer to send you free fabric samples if you can't visit a showroom in person. I chose a living-room set made from stain-resistant recycled velvet. It not only feels soft and luxurious but has held up to almost nightly couch binkies and I can wipe bunny fur right off of it like a dream – no lint roller required! I also was able to customize my couches with metal legs instead of wood so my bunnies couldn't easily chew them.

## Hazard-free

Our bunnies' little bodies are very sensitive, so I wanted to make sure whatever furniture we brought into our

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## History

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that people started to believe rabbits eat carrots. Rabbits in the wild do not naturally eat carrots, and veterinarians warn that carrots are unhealthy for rabbits. But don't give them Trix, either!



Clark Gable and Bugs Bunny eating carrots.

## Free Zoom Classes From HRS

By House Rabbit Society

Sign up now to attend classes on:

- Rabbit Care 101, which covers the basics of taking care of a house rabbit
- Introducing rabbits, a starter guide for how to bond two (or more) rabbits
- Rabbit behavior, to learn about strengthening the human-rabbit bond

• Pet loss support, a safe group space to grieve and celebrate the life of your rabbit

• And more to come!

Register now at [center.houserabbit.org](https://center.houserabbit.org). We also offer one-on-one behavior and bonding support consultations by appointment. We will be announcing Spanish language classes in the near future, so be on the lookout for that announcement soon!

## Couch

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home would cause as little damage or distress to them as possible. With this in mind, I decided not to buy anything that would have an off-gassing period, given potential health risks and the unpleasant smell. My bunnies don't want to be near me when I smell like chlorine from the pool, so I can't imagine how poor of a reaction they would have to stinky furniture.

### Repairable or replaceable

I should note that even after shopping for safe, durable furniture, I still bunny-proof my home. My experience with bunnies has taught me that if bunnies CAN damage something, they might one day, even if they never show interest in a particular household item for years. When I was not as wise as I am now I used to let my bunnies free roam without as much supervision, and it was during this time that one of them (ahem, Nala) decided to chew chair cushions. Fortunately, Nala did not seem to eat the material but I still needed to replace the chair.

Because accidents can happen, I looked for and eventually found a line of furniture that sold replacement cushions.

Photos: Megan Hillands



Charlie has a preferred spot on the new couch where he likes to sit for pets.

I love the idea that if a bunny (or person) damages a small section of the couch I can just buy a cushion rather than needing to replace the whole thing.

### Comfortable

While not all bunnies will want to hop up on the couch next to you, some will. I have a bunny (Charlie) who loves to get off the ground and have a better view of his surroundings. He sometimes seems to prefer the couch (or let's be



Charlie stares at my leg as it's in the way of his couch binkies.

fair, the end table) to the floor. I wanted to make sure the new couches would be relatively safe for a bunny so chose a set with a good amount of firmness that also was not too high off the ground for safety.

My diligent shopping paid off, and now Charlie enjoys visiting me on the couch for a nightly pets session. If I knew a new sofa would mean happier bunnies, I probably would have made the switch years ago.



## Animal Communicator Offers Sessions

Would you like to communicate with your current companion or one who has crossed the rainbow bridge? Warren, animal communicator, has generously offered his services, donating 100% of his fee to benefit the rabbits of Rabbit, Rescue & Rehab.

He is offering 20-minute phone sessions to help you learn more about your rabbit or any other furry family member.

For all information, email: [chiguygo@icloud.com](mailto:chiguygo@icloud.com).

## Rest in Peace, My Dear Tillie

By Megan Krieman

On Jan, 26, 2017, I went to ACC to adopt a new partner bunny for my recently widowed boy Hugo. While there, I sat with and observed many sweet ladies. Once I thought I'd met them all and was ready to make a selection, I noticed two tiny black paws reaching out from the bottom kennel. I asked Amy Odum, volunteer extraordinaire, if I could meet her. I got into the pen and she was funny, affectionate and animated, and she instantly stole my heart. Tillie, the little black bunny, came home with me but it took a little time for Hugo to be won over. Unfortunately, ACC had mislabeled her as spayed. It took an inconclusive belly shave to look for a scar, followed up by an expensive ultrasound, to confirm that she was in fact intact. Once this issue was remedied, Hugo was much fonder of the less hormonal Tillie. They were a loving and beautiful match until we lost Hugo in October 2018.

Photos: Megan Krieman



Hugo and Tillie.

I've always had a two-bunny minimum at home. Bonded pairs made me less anxious on long work days or when traveling and I suspected it did the same for them, as well as offer companionship. I had been quite lucky with all of my bonds being fairly easy and successful. With Tillie I tried two rounds of speed dates with many different bachelors. First we brought home Grayson. A very



Tillie.

handsome and affectionate fellow. He and Tillie would have good dates, share meals and affection, but it would eventually go south and fur flew. Next up was Otis. A lovely elder bunny that I agreed to foster and bring back to good health. I decided to see if he and Tillie could be a match. Unfortunately Otis had zero interest in partnering. After another round of speed dates we came home with Jamie. Jamie was a buoyant spirit and very interested in Tillie. Again, dates would go well. Grooming, and

relaxing in each other's company but ultimately again, fur would fly. After trying for a year and a half, it had become evident that Tillie wanted to be a single lady.

Tillie and I lived as a bonded pair until her recent and unexpected passing in June. I miss my 12-year-old girl terribly. She was sweet, sassy and affectionate. She had a good long and healthy life. I miss her kisses, snuggles, bright eyes and determination. Rest in peace, my dear Tillie.

# Spokesbunny Noah Reports From Long Island

By Noah the Bunny with assistance from Shari Zagorski

Hello my human friends!

The month of May started out with a really fun event at the Clark Botanic Garden in Albertson. The Town of North Hempstead's annual Spring Fest was held on May 4, and Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group was invited to be a part of this big day. There were many outdoor and indoor exhibits, crafts and performances throughout the afternoon for thousands of attendees.

We had the opportunity to set up a display table with information about LIRRG and have several spokesbunnies throughout the afternoon for visitors to touch and pet. This was apparently part of the "Rabbit Playground" exhibit, although I'm not quite sure where the rabbit toys were.

Upon arrival in the morning, several very sweet teenagers helped my humans find the correct room inside the Clark House. Once we settled in, LIRRG's human volunteers set up the educational display table and I was assigned a special smaller table where children and visitors of all sizes could pet me, touch me, or just look at me up close.

During the day, several other LIRRG spokesbunnies and humans came to help out. Gingko, fostered by Katie and family, had a good social outing for part of the day in his pen, and he sat on the table during my breaks. Fosters Reggie and Diamond, brought by LIRRG volunteer Susanne and family, appreciated the comfort of each other during their first gig as LIRRG ambassadors and preferred to remain inside their playpen. All of us received loads of petting and had volunteers assigned to monitor our safety at all times.

One highlight of my day was that I was able to bring my Grandma along to volunteer at the event. In addition to making sure all of the children had

Photos: Shari Zagorski



Face painting was popular at the Spring Fest, but my face is already colorful.



Bringing joy to children.



LIRRG display table and volunteer Tony.

a chance to pet me, she also answered questions about bunny care and about our extremely entertaining personalities.

As I type this with my little paws, I'm getting ready to help out as LIRRG spokesbunny at a few sessions of summer camp... stay tuned for more...

Until next time, this is Spokesbunny Noah signing off!



My human Grandma helping at the event and giving me some bonus mushing.



Loads of cuddles throughout the day.



Reggie and Diamond taking a quiet break together.

## What Are Your Rabbit's Favorite Foods, Treats or Toys?

By Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Friends of LIRRG is a Facebook community of over 1,000 rabbit owners and rescue volunteers who live on Long Island. We asked our Friends to tell us which foods, treats and toys their rabbits love the best of all. Here's what they had to say.



Miriam.

“Foster bun Miriam loves any toy she can toss around – she’s a boss bunny!”



Foxie.

“Foxie loves to play with her toy keys, but her favorite ‘toy’ is her food bowl! Once she finishes her pellets she tosses it around!”

– Jill C.



Dahlia.

“Dahlia loves palm leaf bowls and she also enjoys chewing on her Timothy hay mats. Her favorite treats are forage mixes and fresh parsley.”

– Lecana



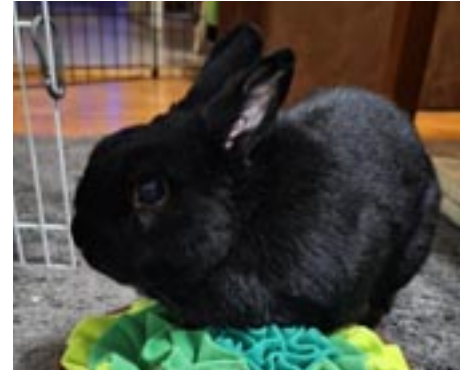
Oreo.

“Cardboard shoe inserts! It’s the funniest thing to see!”

– Laura C.

“Emmett never plays with toys but he’ll devour a toilet paper roll with hay in it. Trixie loves toys. If she hears anyone stacking her cups, she immediately runs over and throws them around. She also loves the ball that lets out some pellets when you roll it. I have to take it away from her at night sometimes because she’s so loud with it when she keeps rolling it up against her pen! This is her new favorite obsession.”

– Heather F.



Ellie.

“Any food! Ellie acts like she never gets fed, despite her two meals AND fresh hay every day.”

– Emily V.



Pat Bün.

“Pat Bün LOVES his box filled with toilet paper rolls. We’ll put treats inside the box and he’ll dig them out.”

– Jessica P.



Trixie.

## Rabbit Rescue & Rehab's Beautiful Foster Rabbits

For Information on Adopting Any of Our Rabbits, Contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

### Dove

Unfortunately, the summer of 2023 was a record year for outdoor rabbit abandonments. We were called to a neighborhood where several rabbits were seen trying to survive. During week two, little Dove appeared on the scene. She was very young and quite fearful; it took a few days to convince her that we were there to bring her to safety.

She is a beautifully elegant 7- to 8-month-old sable seal point, tipping the scales at 3.5 pounds.

Dove is a very sweet little girl. She is rather demure, with a cautious approach to the world. She is an active girl and loves to run and does fantastic binkies! Her binky game is no surprise because she has the legs of a supermodel! Dove is spayed and would thrive in a calm, adult home. If you are interested in adopting Dove, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).



Dove.

### Pink

Pink is a sweet Himalayan boy with an affectionate demeanor. He does have a big energetic streak and likes to get in his exercise by running big laps and fluffing up his blankets before settling in for a nap on his IKEA doll bed. He's particularly fond of toys that can be tossed around, and loves all of his pellets, greens and hay. Pink is neutered and ready for adoption. If you are interested in adopting Pink, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### Skye

Skye is a 3.5-pound Himalayan rabbit. Skye was found alone, tragically dumped in Central Park in terrifyingly poor condition, clearly having been horribly mistreated for quite some time even before she was abandoned outside. A passerby thankfully saw Skye outside and, wanting to help this poor bunny, brought her back to his home. Once there, she surprised him with a litter of

babies. When we first saw Skye shortly after she had given birth, every bone in her small, frail body was visible and all movement was taxing for her in her emaciated state. Still, Skye was a wonderful mother to her babies and slowly but surely, she gained weight and became stronger. Today, Skye is completely healthy and enjoying some well-deserved free time now that her babies are grown up and off on their own adventures. Skye is looking for a quiet, calm human companion to match her sweet but reserved energy.



Pink.



Skye.

She is a gentle soul who will form a close bond with her family and enjoy receiving affection, provided she is given the opportunity to approach first. Skye has a particular affinity for her Oxbow woven grass toys and is content to stretch out and fall into a deep sleep for afternoon naps. If you are interested in adopting Skye, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

*(Continued on page 15)*

## ADOPTIONS

### RRR Rabbits in Foster Care

*(Continued from page 14)*

#### Indigo

Indigo's puppy-like playfulness is as endearing as his ears are enormous! Indigo arrived at ACC showing signs of terrible neglect. When we pulled him from the shelter, the veterinary treatment he was receiving had already filled an 8-plus-page-long medical record in that short time. He was facing an abscess, severe sore hocks, skin conditions, parasites and more. Today, Indigo has settled in beautifully and gained a whole 3 pounds since he first arrived at the shelter (currently tipping the scales at a magnificent 9.5 pounds!). Now living on cushy, appropriate floor material, Indigo's once infected and painful hocks are growing in nice new fur to protect his wonderfully giant feet. Indigo has been neutered and is living in foster care. He hopes to soon meet his forever family who will enjoy playtime and cuddle time as much as he does! If you are interested in adopting Indigo, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Lucy

Lucy was found outside in a dirt alleyway off a busy street where someone had cruelly abandoned her. Now adjusting to the safety of her foster home, Lucy's active and curious personality is shining through. She is a very young and playful rabbit who loves interacting with people and toys, and especially enjoys carrying her stacking cups to different spots around her pen and exercise space. If you are interested in adopting Lucy, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

#### Carmela

Carmela is a young medium-sized Rex rabbit. Her beautiful coat is mostly white with tan and black spots. She is a sweet rabbit who loves to have her soft nose petted. She also likes to explore her house, but her favorite thing is to relax with a nice soft blanket. Carmela is shy and would likely do best in an adult-only home. She would also likely make



Indigo.



Lucy.



Carmela.

a good partner for another rabbit. She has been spayed and is in foster care. For more information and/or to arrange a meeting with Carmela, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

### RRR Update: Devi



Beautiful, now-healthy Devi, posing for the camera. She was rescued from a high-predator area this spring.



Devi outside, before she was rescued.

Photos: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab

## These Rabbits Are Available for Adoption From Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group

Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group has many rabbits available for adoption. Here are a few of the wonderful bunnies looking for homes. For more information about adoptions, please contact LIRRG at this email address: [information@longislandrabbitrescue.org](mailto:information@longislandrabbitrescue.org)



Eden.

### Eden

Serene and beautiful like the place after which she was named, Eden will capture your heart. She has been described as sweet, reserved and lovable. Once she's familiar with you, she'll be sure to entertain you with nightly binky performances. Eden is a foodie at heart, loving all kinds of food and enjoying her hay often. Perfect litter-box habits and a quiet demeanor make her a great roommate. She prefers to be in a home with lots of space for her to explore, and she'd prefer any children that share her space to be at least 13. Eden doesn't mind some noise and could handle living in a more urban area, but she does ask for slow movements whenever you're in her space. If Eden were a human: Marie Kondo.

### Anderson

Anderson was more than ready for his rescue. On a sweltering summer day, he found his way to a yard and caught the



Anderson.

attention of a homeowner. Anderson stayed put for days, as though expecting help to arrive soon. After just five minutes on the scene, our volunteers penned him and got him to safety. Care couldn't have come soon enough; Anderson wasn't able to put much weight on his left

Morus.



leg, which was slightly splayed. Catnip & Carrots veterinarians discovered a metatarsal fracture in his back paw and got him on the road to recovery with cage rest, pain medication, and anti-inflammatories. More than just lucky, this handsome rabbit is bright, resilient and gradually overcoming his shyness. He's healing well as he waits to meet his forever family. Anderson will be sure to thrive in a calm home with patient humans.

### Morus

Morus is one of our nine Botanical Babies born on March 23, 2022, but he's the ONLY one with a partial hairless gene! While he was born mostly bald, some fur has started to grow in as he has gotten older. Yes, he has adorable bald spots. He's the first hairless bun in LIRRG history. Morus, like all of his siblings, is vibrant and very playful. He likes to run and jump. He is looking for a forever home to match his bold, fun-loving energy.



(Check Petfinder for Updated Listings;  
Some Rabbits Have Found Homes!)

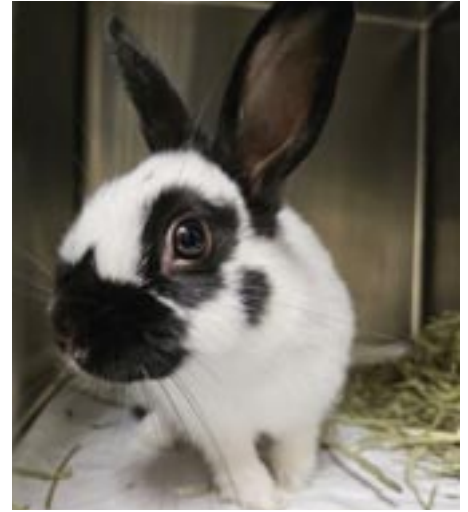
## These Rabbits Are Available At Manhattan Animal Care Center (NYC ACC)



Mimi.



Oreo Man.



Oreo Swirl.



Oreo Flemish.



Lulu.



Matilda.



Timmy.



Racoon.



Parsley.

(Continued on page 18)

**ADOPTIONS**

**Rabbits at Manhattan NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 17)*



Cocoa.



Thumper.



Sage.



Trunks.



Butternut.



Lucy.



Calvin.



Pebbles.



Cotton Bun.

*(Continued on page 19)*

## These Rabbits Are Available At Brooklyn Animal Care Center (NYC ACC)



Pearl.



Bobbi.



Little Bunny.



Nelly.



Charlie.



Squiggles.

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Rabbits at Manhattan NYC ACC

*(Continued from page 18)*



Smoke after grooming.



**ADOPTIONS**

**Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 19)*



Sorbet.



Bill.



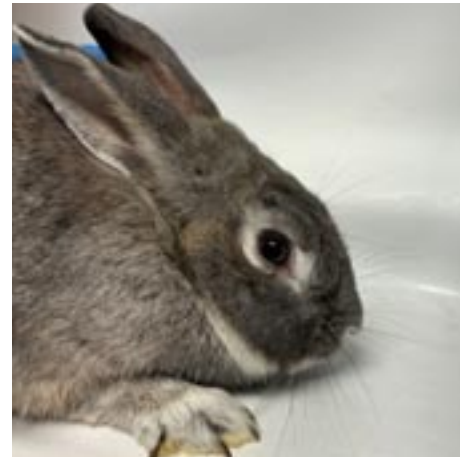
Bugs Bunny.



Mahogany.



Eve.



Little One.



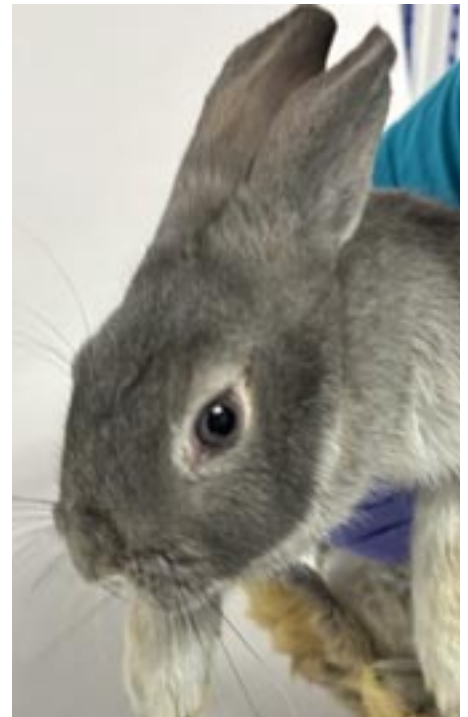
Buster.



Benito.



Chelsea.



Buffy.

*(Continued on page 21)*

ADOPTIONS

**Rabbits at Brooklyn NYC ACC**

*(Continued from page 20)*



Casper.



Hiphop.



Tiny baby bunny.



Fluffy.



Eucalyptus.



Achie.

**Forever Homes Found!**

We are happy to report that Bee, Pop Tart, Hazelnut, Mommy, Mickey, Lyric, Steven, Emerson, Leland, Olly, Sky, Quinn, Oreo Hops, Ghirardelli and Russet were adopted since the last newsletter. Congratulations!

## Close Encounters of the Furry Kind: Understanding Your First Rabbit

By Dana Krempels

Before you begin, you should treat yourself and your bunny to a copy of “**The House Rabbit Handbook**” (5th edition) by Marinell Harriman, the most up-to-date and accurate book on rabbit care. It is available at most major bookstores, or can be ordered at any online book source. No rabbit home should be without it. More information on rabbit care can be found at [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

### The Rabbit Personality

“Is a rabbit more like a cat or a dog?” It’s one of the most frequent questions we rabbit folk are asked. The answer: neither. Dogs and cats are predatory animals, with evolutionary histories completely different from those of herbivores such as rabbits. Whereas the ancestors of today’s dogs and cats were bred for centuries to lack their natural fear of humans, domestic rabbits have been bred primarily for meat, fur and other physical characteristics. This means that when you adopt a bunny, you adopt a “domestic” animal with much of the heart and spirit of a wild creature whose ancestors survived only if they were alert, easily startled, and had a natural tendency to avoid large, scary-looking animals like humans. It may be more challenging to win the trust of this sensitive, intelligent creature than it is to win the heart of a puppy or kitten that has been bred to trust you from birth, but it’s worth the effort.

The myth that certain rabbit breeds make better pets is just that: a myth. We have known aggressive lops (a breed supposedly gentle and friendly), super-affectionate dwarfs (supposedly hyper and mean) and every type of personality you can imagine in our “mutts.” Some rabbits are friendly from the day they’re born, whereas others are shy and

retiring. Once in a while, we’ll meet a true Attila the Bun, with an aggressive nature that can’t easily be tamed. There are as many rabbit personalities as there are rabbits.

Rabbits are highly intelligent, social and affectionate. They also can be bratty, willful, destructive and even vengeful. It takes a special type of person to be able to coexist happily with such a complex, demanding little soul.

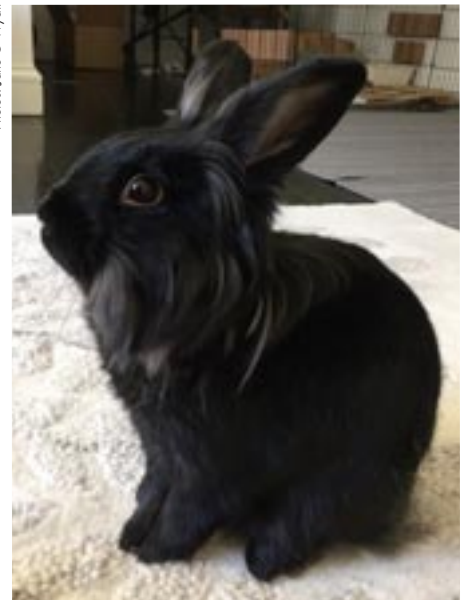
Unfortunately, many people buy rabbits without understanding their true nature, and this is one of the main reasons so many rabbits are “dumped” soon after reaching sexual maturity, when they begin to assert their strong personalities.

### Bunny Handling – and Not

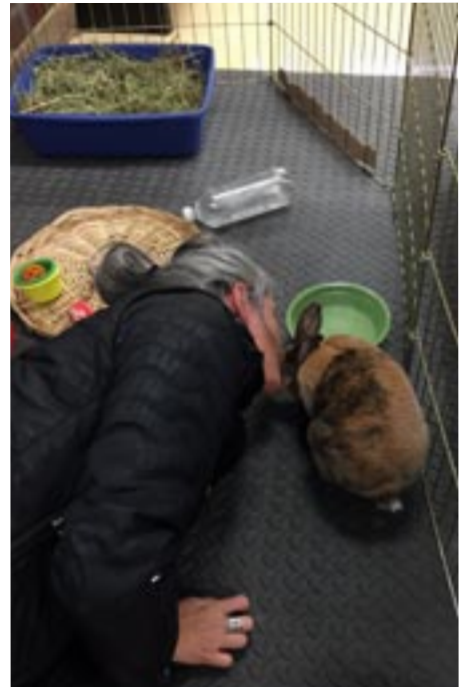
One of the most common misconceptions people have about rabbits, possibly because they look so much like plush toys, is that they like to be held and cuddled. Many people are disappointed to learn that their bunny does not like to be held. But consider for a moment the natural history of the rabbit. This is a ground-dwelling species, and a prey item for many predators. It is completely against a rabbit’s natural tendency to want to be held far above the ground where he cannot control his own motions and activities.

When you force a bunny to be held against his will, you reinforce his innate notion that you are a predator trying to restrain him. Holding a rabbit while he struggles and kicks is not only dangerous for the human (sharp claws!), but also for the rabbit. A rabbit is built for quick escape, with powerful muscles attached to a relatively light, flexible skeleton. When a bunny is held in the air, he lacks the natural “brake” of the ground against his hind feet, and one powerful kick can hyperextend the spine, causing

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Olivia, a former Rabbit Rescue & Rehab bunny, in her new home.



At Petco Union Square, rabbit volunteer Nadine Heidinger lies down on the floor to snuggle with Bongo, her former foster bunny.

it to sublunate or fracture. We have seen an alarming number of young rabbits with broken backs and legs because people (usually children) insisted on carrying them around and handling them against their will. A very few rabbits enjoy being held and cuddled. The vast majority do not, and prefer to snuggle on the ground, with you lying close (like a fellow bunny). If you love your bunny, you’ll respect his preference,

*(Continued on page 23)*

**Close Encounters**

*(Continued from page 22)*

Photos: Jane O'Wyatt



Spooky, who weighs 9 pounds, presents less of a temptation to people who might want to grab and pick up a bunny.

knowing that his safety and well-being depend on your playing with him on his own terms.

This is not to say that a rabbit can never be picked up. Sometimes, as for trips to the vet, a rabbit must be handled, and it's best to learn to do this safely before you have an emergency. A rabbit should never be handled by the ears. To safely pick up a bunny, gently and simultaneously place one hand scooped under the rib cage, and the other splayed around his rear end. Lift quickly and confidently, and turn the bunny so that his feet are placed against your chest. This will make him feel more secure, and less apt to struggle. If he struggles wildly, carefully and firmly lower him to the ground and release him, and then try again. Practice makes perfect. But remember that for playtime situations, it's better not to force the issue of holding and cuddling.

**Getting to Know Your New Bunny**

To understand rabbit behavior, try to think like a rabbit. Remember that as a prey species, a rabbit is naturally shy and wary – much more so than a predatory dog or cat. It will be up to you, the adaptable human, to compromise and alter your own behavior so that the bunny understands you are a friend. Once you have done this, you will have won the unending love and loyalty of a most amazing creature, whose ways of communicating with you may be as subtle as a nose bump on the leg (“Hi, Mom!”), or as overt as a skin-breaking nip (“Put me down!”) or an adamant thump of the hind foot (which can mean anything from “Mom! There’s something scary outside!” to “Hey! Pay attention to me!”)

Imagine what the world looks like to this bunny. She’s surrounded by a new environment, and there’s a big, strange-smelling animal that’s always looming over her. She has no idea you’re trying to be friendly. Her “hard wiring” tells her: “AAAAAAGH!!! It’s going to EAT ME!” Imagine yourself in her bunny slippers: No one speaks her language; she has been taken from her family and has no one of her own species to comfort her; and she has no idea whether you



Cute Lil Britches would probably try to bite a stranger who tried to pick her up!

plan to love her, cage her forever, or have her for dinner. You must gradually and patiently earn her trust. It can take an hour, a day, or even weeks or months. It depends on the personality of the individual rabbit, and on your willingness to be patient and loving.

You and bunny should be together in a private, quiet room. No other pets. No distractions. If children are present, they should be instructed to lie on the floor, too, being very quiet and emulating the behavior of the adult in charge. Stress to the children that getting to know a bunny is a little bit like waiting for a butterfly to land on your head, rather than chasing it around with a net and forcing it to hold still.

Have a little treat – such as a carrot or piece of apple, banana or a little pinch of oats – in your hand. Lie prone on the floor and let the bunny out of her pen. (This should be at ground level so that the bunny can come out and go into the pen as she pleases. Having to grab the bunny every time you want her to come in or out can undo hours of patient trust-building.

Don’t expect the bunny to approach you immediately. Remain quiet and patient, even if it takes an hour or more. Rabbits are naturally curious, and eventually she will come over to sniff you, and perhaps even climb up on your back for a look around.

If the bunny is very shy, resist the temptation to reach out and pet her. Instead, let her sniff you, hop on you and get to know your scent. Eventually, when she sees that she can move freely around you without being touched or grabbed, she will learn that you are not a threat.

If bunny smells the treat you have, and comes to investigate, hold onto it while she nibbles, instead of letting her grab it and run off to eat in a private place. This will establish that she can safely eat

*(Continued on page 24)*

## Close Encounters

(Continued from page 23)

in your presence without worrying that you're going to grab and restrain her.

Have a “bunny playtime” like this every day until it becomes routine, and bunny loses her wariness around you. Touches should come gradually. Extending a finger or hand for her to sniff is a polite overture, and she may allow you to gently rub her forehead, ears, or her temples (the smooth areas on the sides of her head, just below her ears). These are favorite rabbit “scratchy spots,” and a shy bunny is more likely to allow you to touch her head than she is to let you rub her back or any other area where she can't really keep an eye on you.

If bunny withdraws from your attentions, let her. Be patient, and never force anything. Never, ever chase the bunny. Despite what you might hear from other sources, we've never met or heard of a rabbit who truly likes to “play chase.” That's a predator's game, and is more likely to cause terror and stress in your bunny than entertain her. This is one reason that boisterous children and rabbits are NOT a good match.

## Rabbits and Children

In most cases, children and rabbits are not ideal companions. A rabbit's delicate skeleton and prey-species nature predisposes him to be fearful of the attentions of most active, happy children, however well-meaning they might be. It takes a very special, mature child – willing to follow the procedures described above – to make a good companion for a rabbit.

Some people tell us they are disappointed that the rabbit is “not turning out to be the sort of pet we wanted for our kids.” Such folks may have had unreasonable expectations for a rabbit, expecting him to behave more like a dog or cat than a rabbit.

Rather than being disappointed that a rabbit is naturally shy, and not what you might have expected, take the opportunity to teach your children respect for a very different kind of animal whose behaviors and ways of communication are not the same as their own. If a child wants something to carry around and cuddle, provide a stuffed toy – not a live rabbit.

Even if your rabbit is the “family pet,” an adult should always be his primary caretaker. Young children don't have the sense of responsibility necessary to properly care for a rabbit, and should not be expected to behave as adults, especially if the safety of your companion rabbit is at stake. Parents also should be ready to take over the rabbit-care duties of the teenager who goes off to college, leaving Fluffy in their care. A well-cared-for house rabbit, spayed or neutered, can live eight to 12 years, or even longer.

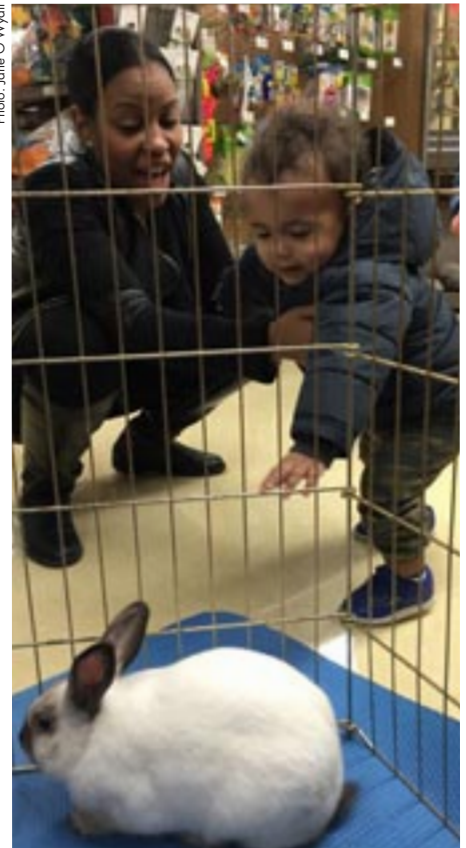
## She Is a Sentient Creature, Not a Toy

Look at your rabbit with enlightened eyes. Understand that nature made her just as surely as it made you, and that, like yours, her personality is at least partly a product of her ancestry. She is not a toy; she is a highly intelligent, loving being who can become an interactive, loyal member of the family if you allow her to be what she is – a rabbit. The person who can do this is in store for the most delightful companionship of a lifetime.

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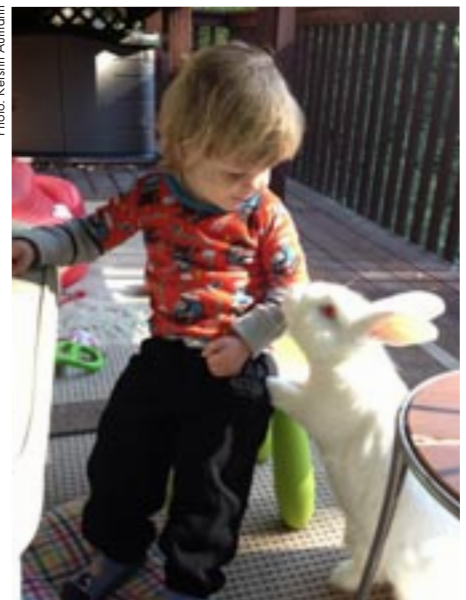
*Copyright – Dana Krempels, Ph.D.  
Senior Lecturer;  
Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Department of Biology,  
University of Miami*

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Marshmallow, at Petco Union Square, is protected from an impulsive admirer.

Photo: Kerstin Aumann



Rabbit volunteer Kerstin Aumann trained her son Alex (seen here with Snowball) how to behave toward bunnies.



## Adoptable Rabbits

There are lots of adoptable rabbits available in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Westchester and Long Island.

To adopt a rabbit in **New York City** or **Westchester**, contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).

On **Long Island**, contact [information@longislandrabbitrescue.org](mailto:information@longislandrabbitrescue.org).

You can also visit Manhattan Animal Care Center at 326 East 110th St., between First and Second avenues, and the Brooklyn Animal Care Center at 2336 Linden Boulevard.

Rabbits for adoption in Manhattan and Brooklyn can be found by going to: <http://www.nycacc.org/> and doing an adoption search (for ACC inquiries about adoption/bunny dates, email [adopt@nycacc.org](mailto:adopt@nycacc.org)). Volunteers are there every weekday evening and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, but it is best to arrange an appointment first.

Bunny speed dates can be arranged by appointment only. Please contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com) to make arrangements.

Many of our rabbits are living in foster homes and you can meet them as well. You also can arrange to foster a rabbit until he or she finds a permanent home. Contact [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com)

For basic information about rabbits as pets, go to [rabbitrescueandrehab.org](http://rabbitrescueandrehab.org), [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org) and the House Rabbit Society main site, [www.rabbit.org](http://www.rabbit.org).

**If interested in volunteering for Rabbit Rescue & Rehab, please email [nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com](mailto:nyc.metro.rabbits@gmail.com).**

Photo: Jane O'Wyatt



Lulabelle.

## Donations

All donations go directly to caring for our foster rabbits and are tax-deductible. Please help us help them by sending contributions to: Rabbit Rescue & Rehab/NYC Metro Rabbit, 333 Mamaroneck Ave., #363, White Plains, NY 10605 or <https://www.rabbitrescueandrehab.org/donate>

To contribute to Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group, please go to [www.longislandrabbitrescue.org](http://www.longislandrabbitrescue.org).

## THUMP JULY 2024

Newsletter of RRR/NYC HRS  
[rabbitrescueandrehab.org](http://rabbitrescueandrehab.org)

Editor: Susan Lillo

Creative Director: Jane O'Wyatt

Masthead Logo Designer:  
Mary Ann Maier

Rabbit Rescue & Rehab is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt corporation in New York State. Our purpose is to rescue, rehabilitate and find permanent homes for abandoned, abused and neglected rabbits, and to educate the public on rabbit care through publications, phone consultations, home visits and presentations. This newsletter is published by RRR/NYC HRS, which is solely responsible for its content. We retain the right to edit all submissions, which become the property of the NYC Chapter and cannot be returned.

## Rabbit-Savvy Veterinarians

Here's our recommended vet list for the New York metropolitan area. **Please note that many clinics have multiple veterinarians, and our recommendations are for specific veterinarians in those clinics.** If you can't get an appointment with a recommended vet at one clinic, don't assume (no matter what you are told by the clinic) that other vets in the same clinic can help your rabbit. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the vets on this list, please contact Mary Cotter at (914) 643-0515. When you make an appointment with any of these vets, please tell them you were referred by us.

### Manhattan:

**Deborah Levison, DVM**  
Symphony Veterinary Center  
170 West 96th Street,  
New York, NY 10025  
(212) 866-8000

**Katherine Quesenberry, DVM**  
The Animal Medical Center  
510 East 62nd Street,  
New York, NY 10065  
(212) 838-7053, (212) 329-8622

**Alexandra Wilson, DVM**  
The Center for Avian and  
Exotic Medicine  
568 Columbus Avenue,  
New York, NY 10024  
(212) 501-8750

### Westchester County:

**Gil Stanzione, DVM**  
Dakota Veterinary Center  
381 Dobbs Ferry Road,  
White Plains, NY 10607  
(914) 421-0020

**Laurie Hess, DVM**  
Veterinary Center for Birds and Exotics  
709 Bedford Road,  
Bedford Hills, NY 10507  
(914) 864-1414

### Long Island:

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**  
**Erica Campbell, DVM**  
Catnip & Carrots Veterinary Hospital  
2056 Jericho Turnpike  
New Hyde Park, NY 11040  
(516) 877-7080

**Heidi Hoefler, DVM**  
Island Exotic Vet Care  
591 East Jericho Turnpike  
Huntington Station, NY 11746  
(631) 424-0300

**Ellen Leonhardt, DVM**  
Animal General of East Norwich  
6320 Northern Blvd  
East Norwich, NY 11732  
(516) 624-7500

**Maggie Camilleri, DVM**  
Paumanok Veterinary Hospital  
639 Route 112  
Patchogue, NY 11772  
(631) 475-1312

**Jeff Rose, DVM**  
Jefferson Animal Hospital  
606 Patchogue Rd. (Route 112)  
Port Jefferson Station, NY 11776  
(631) 473-0415

**Shachar Malka, DVM**  
Long Island Bird & Exotics  
Veterinary Clinic  
333 Great Neck Road  
Great Neck, NY 11021  
(516) 482-1101

## Licensed HRS Educators

### NYC/Westchester:

**Alex McIe**  
Chapter Manager,  
NYC House Rabbit Society  
alexlmcie@gmail.com

**M.C. Basile**

**Mary Cotter**  
Founder, Rabbit Rescue & Rehab,  
Adviser to Thump,  
mcotter64@gmail.com,  
(914) 643-0515

**Jeanine Callace**  
Rofoyo.pippin@verizon.net

**Marcie Frishberg**

**Cindy Stutts**  
bygolyoly@yahoo.com,  
(646) 319-4766

**Laura George, DVM**

### Long Island:

**Nancy Schreiber**  
President, Long Island Rabbit Rescue  
Group, nschreibmd@gmail.com,  
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

**Mary Ann Maier**  
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group  
Volunteer, altitude8@yahoo.com,  
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

**Donna Sheridan**  
Long Island Rabbit Rescue Group  
Volunteer, hpocus217@yahoo.com,  
LongIslandRabbitRescue.org

**Jennifer Saver, DVM**