

# CHOOSING YOUR PET RABBIT



To help determine what is involved in keeping a pet rabbit, consider the following questions.

How many pet rabbits should I adopt?

If you only want one rabbit a boy (buck) or girl (doe) is fine, just remember to set aside a little time each day for a cuddle, pat or chat. When left constantly alone or neglected bunnies will become unfriendly and aloof towards you. If you choose more than one pet, several does are quite compatible if they are introduced while they are young and are not separated for more than a day after maturity. When choosing a buck and doe remember that they will need to be separated before sexual maturity (about 3½ to 4 months old) or alternatively have the male de sexed, so the pair can stay together as affectionate companions.

Which is best a crossbred or a pure bred?

Both have the potential to be either wonderful pets or a regrettable mistake. Every rabbit no matter what his breeding has his own individual personality and more importantly, he will reflect the kind of human handling he has experienced.



Usually crossbred rabbits are attained from unknown sources, the size it will grow can be unpredictable, and their inherited nature may be aggressive, placid or timid. Purebred rabbits have been specially bred over many years by dedicated rabbit enthusiasts and are more predictable in size and (generally) breed temperaments.

Will they be kept indoors or outside?

It is optional to maintain one or the other or even a bit of both – when you are aware of the pros and cons. Indoor house rabbits can be charming, undemanding, affectionate, entertaining and relaxing as long as you understand their needs and requirements. They can be house trained, using a litter tray though may get up to mischief such as nibble houseplants and electrical wires unless precautions are taken. An outdoor bunny should be provided with a cosy water- proof hutch that is well built to keep her in and predators out. Large exercise runs or pens are safer than free range frolicking within an entire backyard as you may be growing poisonous plants or place bunny in danger of being attacked by a neighbour's dog or cat, amongst other predators.

## Are you allergic to cat or dog fur?

Many individuals with mild allergies can live comfortably with a pet rabbit. When allergies are of a more serious nature, the Angora breeds are often quite suitable for sufferers. Angoras have wool instead of fur and it well worth trying or testing this lovable breed, especially if your life is lacking in a companion pet. Angoras do need regular grooming and clipping to keep their wonderful coats matt free and in good condition.

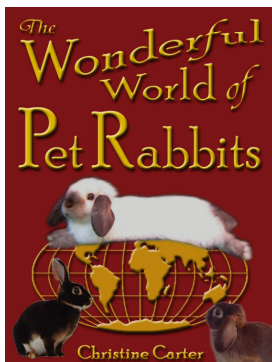
## Would you like to breed rabbits?

If you decide to endeavor to breed rabbits you will need to start with healthy, good quality stock and make sure they are not closely related. Before even that step is taken you will need to learn all about rabbit husbandry, build suitable hutches, choose a breed or breeds which you are attracted to and consider joining a rabbit club and associate with like minded people.

It is not recommended to breed too often or indiscriminately, as good homes will have to be provided for all the babies. Breeding rabbits is not a profitable business if that is your intention, as many hours of hard work can only be a labour of love. You cannot cut corners or neglect rabbits as they wholly depend on you for their well being and happiness.

## Health checks when you purchase a bunny

- Overall active, alert and healthy appearance.
- Well fed – spine and hips not overly exposed or bony.
- Not over fed, pot bellied, fat or have an excessively large dewlap.
- Clean eyes and nose – no discharges, weeping or sneezing.
- Clean ears – no scabs, flakiness or discharge.
- Coat healthy and shiny – no bare patches, dandruff, scabs or parasites.
- Teeth – not overgrown, twisted or broken.
- Clean genitals – discharge and diarrhoea free.



Find tons of helpful information in our first and only Australian book

### **'The Wonderful World of Pet Rabbits'**

Available from libraries or author Christine Carter

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