



THE Rabbit Advocate



PROVIDING INSIGHTS INTO THE LIVES OF HOUSE RABBITS

SUMMER 2005

Tumbledown Finds Her Forever Home!

He didn't care what color, breed or sex the rabbit was – he just wanted to give a rabbit a second chance and a good home.

By Lorraine Bushek

John Mitchell was reading the morning paper at his downtown Portland studio apartment when he came across a story of rabbits abandoned at Glendoveer Golf Course. At the time, the furthest thing from John's mind was adopting a pet and he had never given a thought to a rabbit as a companion animal. The Oregonian article, highlighting the Rabbit Advocates' First Annual Glendoveer Bunny Hop, explained that Metro Parks and Rabbit Advocates were teaming up to draw attention to the many rabbits that had been illegally dumped at the golf course.

It was upsetting to John that people could be so cruel as to release pet rabbits in the park, abandoning them to certain death by predators and cars. He called Metro Parks to find out how he could help. Metro referred him to the Rabbit Advocates Helpline. After talking to John and describing the situation, RA volunteer Mary Huey sent an email to RA foster parents explaining that John wanted to help by adopting one of the abandoned rabbits. He didn't care what color, breed or sex the rabbit was - he just wanted to give a rabbit a second chance and a good home. A week later John met Tumbledown, a bright-eyed California dwarf with a sweet face and a shy, charming personality.

At their introduction, John carefully picked up Tumbledown and gently stroked her head. In no time, Tumbledown realized she had found someone to give her the love and attention she desired. Within an evening, Tumbledown had settled comfortably into her new new home, beginning a joyful life of napping on the couch, hanging out under the end table and occasionally hopping into her cage to eat and use her litter box. That first night in her new home Tumbledown jumped into John's bed in the wee hours of the morning. John awoke to find Tumbledown staring straight into his eyes. She seemed to be admiring the man who saved her life.



John Mitchell and Tumbledown get to know each other.



**Inside:
The ABC's
of Hay!**

**Cool Tips
for a Safe
Summer!**

The Easter Bunny Grows Up!

**Saturday, Aug. 20
10am - 4pm**

**Oregon Humane Society
Education Hall**

Rabbit Advocates are going to explore what happens to the Easter Bunny as he gets older.

What can we expect from him? What will he be like when he gets older? How should his environment change as he ages?

There will be information on housing, health, diet and some interactive activities! A panel of vets will be available to answer questions and of course there will be bunnies.

Hope to see you there!



Keeping Bunny Healthy: The ABC's of Hay

Hay should comprise: approximately 85% of your bunny's diet and be available to him at all times. Hay does a whole list of important things, including: keep the gut moving and healthy, prevent most dental problems, and prevent issues like stasis, hairballs, diarrhea and other common ailments of rabbits with diets lacking in fiber.

By Brian Zulauf

Hay is by far the most important aspect of your bunny's diet. In fact, it should comprise approximately 85% of the diet. Hay does a whole list of important things: most crucially, it keeps the gut moving and healthy, and helps prevent dental problems. The single most important thing a bunny parent can do to maintain a rabbit's health is to provide constant access to hay.

Varieties of Hay

Hay comes in many shapes, sizes, colors and qualities and it is important to know what you are buying and what type might best suit your bunny. The best hays to feed rabbits are grass hays; these include timothy, bermuda, oat and orchard grass. Mixtures of two or more types of grass hay are sometimes available. Alfalfa hay is commonly available but it is NOT a grass hay, and is too rich for most rabbits. It is usually best given to rabbits under 7 months of age or (if recommended by a vet) to senior buns who have trouble keeping weight on.

Hays are often referred to as "first cut" or "second cut". This simply refers to when the hay was harvested. In Oregon, hay is typically harvested in June. Some areas may produce a second crop in late summer or autumn. First cut is often more fibrous and tougher. Second cut is usually a little softer and has slightly lower fiber content. Both are acceptable feed sources. Your rabbit will tell you which he prefers.



photos: below, Lorraine Bushek, right, Kern Syphar



A new arrival from San Francisco (above) gets some hay to start his new life in Portland on a healthy note.

Lorraine Bushek started early encouraging her foster babies to eat hay. As with humans, good habits start young.

Where to Buy Hay

Those small packages of hay from the pet store are expensive and they don't last very long. Consider buying in bulk to save money.

Feed stores typically sell timothy hay for \$10 - \$15 per bale. Look for fresh bales of hay in July; if you have space to store a bale, that's a good time to stock up. Quality varies widely, so examine the hay carefully before you take it home. The

best hay is "grade 1" or "export quality".

There are a number of places where one can order hay online. Examples are www.bunnybytes.com, www.oxbowhay.com, and www.mybunny.org. All of these sites sell great quality hay; however, the cost of shipping can be prohibitive.

The Rabbit Advocates may be able to assist, as well. We often have a bale (about 110 pounds) which could be split with a fellow bunny lover. Just email info@adoptarabbit.org for more details.

Storing Hay

Hay which is old or improperly stored may develop mold, which is dangerous to your rabbit's health. Watch out for dust (although there will always be some), dark splotches, dampness, any signs of mold or fungus, or unpleasant odor.

Most house rabbit parents keep several pounds, or even bales of hay on hand in order to meet the demands of their voracious bunnies. It is important to store it properly to prevent mold. Keep the hay in a dry place with plenty of ventilation. A closed plastic container, while convenient, can become a breeding ground for mold if not properly ventilated.

Allergic to hay?

An allergy to hay is not uncommon and can become an issue for some rabbit owners. Luckily, there are a number of different ways to address this problem. One option is to try different types of hay. An allergy to one type does not necessarily mean you are allergic to others. Try orchard grass or second-cut timothy.

Store the hay in a location you don't frequent too often and only handle it with gloves. Vacuum more frequently to pick up loose strands and dust. If you still experience symptoms, try offering bunny



photo: Kern Sypher

Buttons has her own ideas about what makes for a good meal!

Rounding Out the Diet

While hay provides the bulk of a rabbit's diet, you'll also want to provide a good quality pelleted feed, vegetables and fruits as a treat. Check our website, www.adoptra-bbit.org for our complete dietary recommendations, including a list of safe veggies and fruits.

Remember that your rabbit's digestive tract is very sensitive, so make changes gradually.



photo: Brian Zulauf

Putting hay in the litter box encourages both eating of hay and use of the litter box.

compressed hay pellets that offer some of the benefits of hay but contains the dust better. (They are not a substitute for feed pellets in that they are not fortified with other nutrients.)

Encouraging Bunny to Eat More Hay

Some bunnies need extra encouragement to add more hay to the diet. If your rabbit is not an enthusiastic hay eater, try offering hay instead of pelleted food when bunny is hungry. If bunny expects her meal first thing in the morning, offer hay first.

Rabbits, like people, have taste preferences, so you may have to try different kinds of hay to find just the right kind.



photo: Kern Sypher

Bunnies are like two year olds when it comes to food—given a choice they will eat the treats and leave the healthy stuff!

Some Sources of Hay in the Portland Area

It's always a good idea to call to check on availability. Cost and quality may vary.

Aloha Feed & Garden
503-649-6723
Timothy & orchard grass bales

Calaway Trading, St. Helens, Oregon
503-366-6767

Export quality timothy hay. Half, full bales and by ton. Other hays also

Hollywood Pet Hospital
503-234-9229
Prepackaged Oxbow Hay Co. products

Linnton Feed and Seed
503-286-1291
Timothy & mixed grass bales

Southwest Animal Hospital
503-643-2137
Prepackaged Oxbow Hay Co. products

Western Pet Supply
503-297-6644
Bagged timothy bales.

Wichita Feed and Hardware,
503-775-6767
Orchard grass & alfalfa bales

Wilco Farm Stores,
Newburg
503-537-2659,
Oregon City
503-656-0616
Export quality timothy bales and by weight.

Some Internet Sources:

www.oxbowhay.com
www.mybunny.org
www.bunnybytes.com

Making a Difference for the Rabbits

Spring is a busy season for Rabbit Advocate volunteers. That's when we work extra hard to reach the public and encourage folks to do their homework before they bring home an "Easter bunny". This spring, we've held several educational outreach events, worked with media to get the word out, and even participated in a long-distance rescue! Here's a sampling of our many recent activities.

Glendoveer Bunny Hop

It was a beautiful spring morning when Rabbit Advocate volunteers held their first annual Glendoveer Bunny Hop. Glendoveer Golf Course has been a notorious "dumping ground" for unwanted rabbits, and the Rabbit Advocates, in partnership with Metro Parks and Greenspaces, hope that with ongoing community outreach efforts we can end the unfortunate practice of abandoning domestic rabbits at the park.

The family event took place along the Glendoveer Fitness Trail and included fun activities like face painting, crafts, hiking and prizes. We're grateful to the many volunteers (and several rabbits) who participated. Nearly every volunteer contributed in some way toward making the event a success.

Rabbit Advocate volunteer Emilie Mathews is only twelve years old, but she's already a veteran RA educator. Emilie has a personal interest in educating young people about compassionate rabbit care. She worked at the education tent, speaking directly with the public about the difference between domestic and wild rabbits and explaining why domestic rabbits do not belong in the park.

Volunteer Sandy Alto, our veteran event planner, did an awesome job of planning and organizing the hundreds of details that went into making the event a reality. Amy Roddey designed the educational



Photo: David Ashton, East County News

Emilie dons ears to educate kids and their parents at the Glendoveer Bunny Hop.

message and also created the take-home activities booklet. Special thanks to Metro's Special Events Coordinator Cathy Sherick, who provided the tents, prizes, and loads of helpful advice.

Rossi Farms Outreach

We're thrilled that Rossi Farms, a farm market on the east side of Portland which used to give away free bunnies, invited us to hold an educational outreach at their Easter Egg Hunt. Five volunteers

and four rabbits braved the windy wet weather to meet the public and answer questions. A good public turnout made it all worthwhile! We were also pleased that Rossi Farms' staff was so receptive and interested in the rabbits. Special thanks to volunteer Valerie Madison for organizing the outreach.

Retail Location Outreaches

Volunteer Erin Ford works tirelessly to bring our educational message to the public through outreaches at locations like Clackamas Petsmart and Healthy Pets Northwest (on Alberta). Her efforts are not limited to the pre-Easter period; they take place year-round. Outreaches require considerable work, transporting rabbits as well as educational materials, and Erin's "luggage" is a familiar sight.

Erin combined her outreach at Healthy Pets with the opening of volunteer Kem Sypher's show of rabbit photos at the shop's mezzanine art gallery.

On the west side, volunteers Beccy Kirk and Ron DeLuca staff the outreach table at Western Pet Supply in Raleigh Hills. By providing an ongoing presence in the community, outreaches educate the public and familiarize folks with the concept of companion rabbits. You never know what might happen at an outreach: it may lead to an adoption, or to a "hutch rabbit" becoming a house rabbit! It's all worthwhile. Thank you, Erin, Becky and Ron!

Rabbits in the Media

Volunteer and PR specialist Dezi Gowdy, holding one very photogenic rabbit, appeared as a guest on KATU's "AM Northwest". Dezi spoke about issues around rabbits and Easter, kids and rabbits, and the reality of rabbits as companion animals, emphasizing the need to do your research before you bring home that cute Easter bunny! Thanks, Dezi!

We also appeared in several publications, including an editorial in Dognose News, an article in the Oregonian, and a feature

story in Portland Family Magazine. As a result of our work with the media, we've been able to reach a wider segment of the public. (See "Tumbledown Finds Her Forever Home", see cover story, to learn how one special bunny benefited from our media campaign.)

Rabbit Advocates Assist California Rabbits

When fellow rabbit rescuers at the San Francisco House Rabbit Society put out a call for help with a large rescue situa-

tion that was straining their resources, Rabbit Advocate volunteers came forward to assist. Through our close ties with other west coast rabbit groups, we are able at times to mutually assist each other in emergency situations, and it's a great feeling to know that we're helping not only the rabbits, but other organizations with a similar mission.

Transport for twelve rabbits was arranged from San Francisco to Portland, with one driver bringing the rabbits from San Francisco to Grant's Pass, and then transferring the rabbits to another driver, RA volunteer Erika Robinson, for the second leg of their journey. A welcoming party



Photo: Kem Sypher



Photo: Kem Sypher

Erika Robinson and twelve San Francisco rabbits arrive in Portland late one night after a very long journey. Foster homes were arranged prior to their departure from the bay area.

of several volunteers met the rabbits at the end of their twelve hour journey. Very special thanks to those who have offered foster homes to these rabbits, to Erika who made the long drive, and to volunteer Mary Huey, who coordinated this long-distance rescue.

And The Work Goes On...

You'd think we would be ready to take a rest after all our spring activities, but the work goes on. Our 70 volunteers continue to plan future events, including the June Garage Sale and the August "Bunny Grows Up" educational event. Our ongoing services, like the Medical Fund and the Helpline, continue year-round. It's the hard work of our dedicated volunteers and the support of our donors and others in the community that make it possible for us to save lives and improve the well-being of companion rabbits. Thanks to all!

Thank You for Caring!

Your kind support of our Medical Fund helps us quickly take care of bunnies in need.

Although they came from sad situations, these rabbits are now safe, warm, and properly fed. Those in need have received medical care (including simple but necessary treatment for fleas & mites) and we are continuously in the process of having all buns spayed/neutered.

Our goal is to find a loving forever home for every rabbit that's born. It's a tall order and it wouldn't be possible without your support.

Special Thanks to Our Youngest Donor!

Seven year old Sarah Roddey, raised money selling lemonade at a Neighborhood Night Out potluck last summer, and by selling her home-made arts and crafts around the neighborhood. Sarah's family has taken in a number of needy rabbits in the last couple of years and she has fallen in love with all of them. Sarah chose to donate her earnings to the Rabbit Advocates Medical Fund because she wants to help the rabbits. We are grateful for her generosity, and we thank her parents for their role in raising a caring and compassionate animal lover!

Sarah (right) at the Glendoveer Bunny Hop, where she talked to kids about why people should not leave pet domestic rabbits in parks.



Photo: David Ashton, East County News

Cool Tips for a Safe Summer

Cool Rabbit!

By Mary Thompson

Summer is here and it's time to shed those winter coats! We can just throw our coats in the closet, but a shedding rabbit needs your help with keeping her coat brushed out to lessen the amount of fur she ingests.

When it starts getting really warm, I give Frances the Fuzzy Lop her summer "punk cut". Your long haired rabbit might enjoy a summer "do", but you must be very careful not to cut her delicate skin. It's a good idea to perform your first foray into rabbit hair styling with someone who has experience with rabbit grooming.

When the temperature gets to be up around 80 degrees, Bun-bun needs to move into a cool part of the house and have access to plenty of fresh water. If there is no cool area in your house, bring out the frozen water bottles and the cool marble tiles to help keep her from overheating. Hang a cool wet towel over a gently blowing fan in her area.

A heat-stressed rabbit appears listless, and may be panting and unresponsive. This is an emergency situation. Take her to the veterinarian or emergency clinic right away. Don't dip her in water, but you can mist her ears or the skin under her hair for a quick cool-down.



photo: Mary Thompson

Adventures Outside!

Lovely summer days are made for lolling around the back yard. The companionship of a rabbit might be just the thing to make the day complete. But before you bring your rabbit outside, be sure that the experience will be a safe one.

Is your grass free of toxic chemicals? Are there any toxic plants that must be off-limits?

Is your yard escape and predator proof? Rabbits can squeeze through the tiniest holes and predators can be anyone from a neighborhood dog or cat to a raccoon or hawk.

Have there been raccoons on your lawn? The raccoon roundworm might be present in feces, and for rabbits infections are almost always fatal.

Is there plenty of shade? Remember, the sun moves, and that cool shady spot may be too hot in 10 min.

What is the temperature? Anything over about 80 degrees is too much for our furry little lagomorphs.

Frances revels in the freedom of her new short hair-do during a supervised play session on the patio.

How Does Your Rabbit Garden Grow? With:

Delicious veggies such as Endive, Romaine, Carrots, Beets, Jerusalem Artichoke, and Radish (for the tops), and Chard;

Delightful herbs such as Lavender, Cilantro, Parsley, Basil, Dill, and Fennel;

Delectable flowers such as Dandelion, Roses, Nasturtium, Pansy, Primrose, and Violets;

Dandy fruits such as Strawberries, Blueberries, Raspberries, Cranberries, and Apples (small amounts only, please!)

Ahhh, the divine bounty of summer!

RABBIT BENEFACTOR

Mariann Walsh

RABBIT RESCUER

Karen DiMilia, in appreciation of Mary Thompson

Vicki Holechek

Larz Malony, in appreciation of Valerie Madison

Evelyn Roeloffs

RABBIT SPONSOR

Anonymous

Shelley Cooper Hanel, in appreciation of Percy and his new family

Charlene K. DeLuca

Veronica Nordeen

Sydney Thomson

Dennis Buckman

RABBIT FRIEND

Amber Bradshaw, in memory of Steve

Marie Broderick, in appreciation of Dr. Darcy Smith DVM

Sheila David

Jennifer Eckhoff

Just Give.org

Marilyn Goldsmith

Connie Kenney, in memory of Lightning

Kaitlyn Landis

Vicki Locklair, in appreciation of Joan Gilbert

Delores Mahn

Keith Moe & Judi Lardner, in memory of Buffy

Robin Murto

John Nerikaat

Michael & Peggy Pohl

Sally Ryon & Lois Gilbert, in honor of Wendy Jones Epstein

Emily Stuparyk, in loving memory of Thumper Bumper

CJ & Deb Tabor

Doreen Walrod

Iris Welch

Jack Wells, in memory of Neri

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Susan Boyl

Collene Griffith

Nancy Huggins

Thank you to everyone who has donated items to our garage sale.

Donations received after May 6, 2005 will be acknowledged in the next issue of the newsletter.

What about an exercise pen?

Good idea. Good idea, but always think of bunny's safety. A shady location is essential! A permanent outside exercise pen should have the sides buried or have a covered wire bottom AND a secure wire top. Rabbits are escape artists and can dig as well as jump. The top ensures that bunny stays inside, and protects her from predators like dogs, raccoons, and hawks that can easily climb or fly into an open pen. Furnish the pen with a place for bunny to hide (a cardboard box is a good choice), toys, hay, and plenty of cool water. A puppy exercise pen should only be used under close supervision. It takes just an instant for a rabbit to escape, or for a predator to grab your beloved pet.

Why Flies are a Health Risk

We know that hawks pose a danger, but did you know that one of the worst flying hazards, outdoors and indoors, is the fly?

There are a couple of quite unpleasant, and even worse, sometimes fatal afflictions caused by flies. The larvae of house flies, blow flies, and bot flies may infect the skin of a rabbit and produce deadly toxins. The rabbits most at risk are geriatric or obese and unable to clean themselves, and rabbits who are incontinent or have a dirty bottom.

Keep your rabbit and his living area clean and free of garbage and feces. Run a fan or use non-toxic pest control devices. Inspect your rabbit daily, especially if he's been outside. If you feel something in his fur, comb through it with a flea comb and inspect the area for holes, lumps, secretions, or the maggots themselves. If despite your best efforts your rabbit has fly-strike, consider it an emergency situation. Go directly to the vet or emergency clinic.

Enjoy Your Companion!

While some of the above may seem scary, it just takes some sensible precautions to ensure a safe and enjoyable summer experience for your rabbit. Above all, spend time with your bunny companion, enjoy each other's company, and have a great summer!



photo: Mary Thompson

Polly enjoys a safe cool spot during summer weather. Though outdoors her pen is built to keep her in and predators out. Many Rabbit Advocates have reported seeing birds of prey swooping down toward their buns. It can happen in a flash and small buns are particularly vulnerable. But the more likely killer is your friendly neighborhood dog.



photo: Mary Thompson

Upcoming Events

The Rabbit Advocates meet at the Oregon Humane Society, 1067 NE Columbia Boulevard, Portland, Oregon, on the third Sunday of every month (or as noted) from 4:00 - 6:00 PM. Meetings include a "Bunny Basics" Q & A session where we invite your questions about any aspect of rabbit care. The public is welcome!

General Meetings

June 12

The differences between domestic rabbits, hares & cottontails.

July 17

Proper Diet: What's good for some might not be good for others.

August 21

No General Meeting. Come to the Easter Bunny Grows Up instead

September 18

Rabbit Speak: What is your bunny telling you?

October 16

Acupuncture?

Special Event

June 18-19

Rabbit Advocates at the Laurelhurst Garage Sale

Come to the sale and help the rabbits. Over 200 feet of merchandise including: furniture, like beds & desks, 1940's trunk, kitchen items, artsy stuff, jewelry, rabbit everything, animal items, bicycles, computers & monitors, books, CD's, VHS tapes, 33rpm records, and much miscellaneous.

Last year, on Saturday, there were over 100 participants in the Laurelhurst Sale

You will not need another "garage sale fix" for a while.

If you want it we probably have it!

*Corner of NE Glisan (3500 block) & Hazelfern Pl.
485 NE Hazelfern Pl.*



Rabbit Advocates

PO Box 14235

Portland

Oregon

97293-0235

Would you like to continue receiving our newsletter, or update your mailing address?

Or maybe make a comment or suggestion?

**WRITE TO US AT
newsletter@
adoptarabbit.org**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED