

Litter Training your Rabbit

The younger the rabbit, the shorter the learning process should be. The ideal age is to bring the prospective house rabbit home at around 8 weeks, so that it can be well socialized and get used to the household.

When you first get home, confine the rabbit to a small area for at least 48 hours. An indoor cage is a good option for this. Cover the bottom with suitable bedding such as shredded paper and hay, and provide food and water, as well as toys. This is to help the rabbit feel secure, and get used to his new surroundings. At this time he will probably choose a corner for his toilet. Once he has done this, a tray – for example a cat litter tray, can be filled with non-clumping cat litter, and placed over this area. In order to speed up his association of this tray with toileting, you can put some of the soiled bedding into the tray.

Keep him confined in the cage for another couple of days, and then allow him supervised access to the rest of the house. You can offer a carrot or other food as a reward every time he hops into the tray to toilet, as well as when he is using his tray. Rabbits often deposit faeces while they are eating, so you can also place a rack of hay at the end of the tray.

A good clean out of the tray every 36 hours is best, any longer may encourage him to go elsewhere. However, it is also important that it is not cleaned too often, or he may lose the association.

Enrichment

Rabbits in the wild burrow and dig, it is very natural behavior for them. Allowing your rabbit to spend time outdoors in a dirt digging box is ideal for him, however if this is not possible, then provide him with substrate such as hay, where he can burrow and hide. The hay will also provide him with the roughage he needs, as well as hours of entertainment munching and gnawing away, so has a multipurpose. Shredded paper can also be used to make a nest, or to burrow in.

Rabbits are social animals, and will love attention and getting played with. They also enjoy getting brushed and being groomed, especially if started at an early age. Provide him with toys and chews. An alternative to placing food in a bowl is to hide and scatter it. This helps stimulate him, prevents boredom, and also encourages him to dig.



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