



# THE THINGS TO THINK

# ABOUT "BEFORE" YOU GET A BUNNY

## KNOW YOUR BUNNY:

Because Bunnies are prey animals, that is, they don't hunt any animal but are the ones that are hunted; they tend to hide illness incredibly well. For this reason you need to know you're bunnies usual behaviors.

If your bunny usually charges towards the feeding area before you even get there with the greens or pellets & suddenly doesn't, then you need to act.

Bunny either goes to a bunny savvy Vet or if it is late at night, you need to be able to administer first aid.

Your bunny savvy Vet can help you with all of the things you will need to know.

## YOUR VET ISN'T NECESSARILY A BUNNY SAVVY VET:

One of the things that we, as members of the public, don't realise is that not all vets are created equal.

In the UK bunnies are considered in the same way as dogs & cats, that is, as companion animals.

In Australia they aren't! They are considered an exotic pet, so the Vets have to do extra training to lean about bunnies.

Unfortunately some Vets don't confess to not knowing anything about bunnies & so you risk losing your precious fur baby.

A Vet in this situation might suggest fasting your bunny prior to de-sexing, if so please don't go back, a bunny should NEVER stop eating.

Always know who your local bunny vet is, not only for the basics but to diagnose more serious issues.

## BUNNIES CAN BE EXPENSIVE:

Bunnies are often thought of as a cheap pet, but they are far from it.

People think nothing of buying a bunny from a market or backyard breeder for \$10 or \$20, BUT you will know nothing about that cute little baby bunny.

Is it a mixed breed, are the parents healthy, do they have teeth issues?

Creating a mixed breed bunny (e.g.: dwarf & mini lop) can cause problems. If a bunnies teeth don't meet properly you can be left with massive Vet bills. Good diet can sometimes keep this at bay, but not always.

Then there is the de-sexing bill, the vaccination bill, the micro-chipping bill & we haven't even talked food yet!

## THE LONG HAUL:

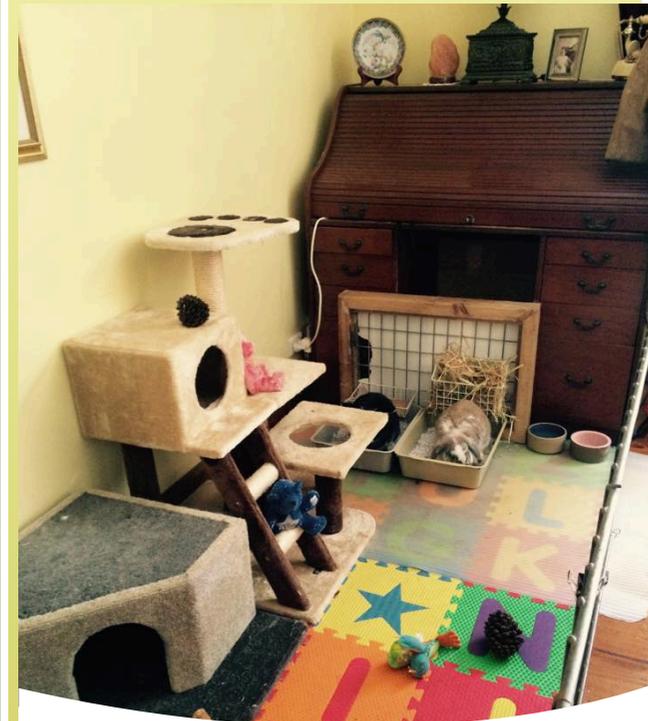
Bunnies come in all shapes & sized, but generally live for around 12 years, so they are a long term commitment.

The best way to get a really sound, healthy & well adjusted bunny is to Adopt.

Most bunnies up for adoption from legitimate rescue are already de-sexed, vaccinated & often micro-chipped as well.

Some rescues even have their bunnies used to being handled.

Bunnies need good food, a lot of love & good companionship...but that is another brochure!



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## INTRODUCTION:

As the owner of a rescue I think I have heard most of the excuses:

“We haven’t got time”

“The bunny isn’t friendly”

“We just can’t be bothered anymore”

These are some of the most common reasons people surrendering their bunnies.

Usually when you do a little digging there is more to the story.

The problem usually exists because back yard breeders, pet shops & even some well meaning but uninformed Vets have given the incorrect information.

Here are a few things to think about BEFORE you go bunny shopping.

## RABBITS ARE NOT FOR CHILDREN:

Rabbits are one of the worst pets for a child & much maligned, not because they are terrible pets, but because a child wants to pick up & cuddle their pet.

A bunny is only picked up in the wild if it is about to be eaten, therefore it is a bunny's natural instinct to be terrified of being picked up.

As a consequence the bunny bites, scratches & runs away. It isn't the bunny's fault; it needs to learn to trust you, its human.

Sit down in your bunny's run with a book & a cup of tea & let it come to you, get to know you & it will build that trust in you. This needs to happen daily & more than once too.

Trust me, your little furry friend will be worth it in the end.

## TRUSTING THE PET SHOPS STAFF KNOWLEDGE:

This heading is a little misleading; it isn't the staff at fault here, but rather the general lack of information about rabbits taught to the staff.

A Pet shop owner generally has one objective in running their business, the bottom line.

When you go to a Pet shop here in Australia, you will find a massive array of products you can buy to feed your bunny, most of them are very, very unhealthy for them.

Pet shops also sell Rabbit hutches, again another great money-spinner for them but realistically you don't need one. It is a lot of money to spend on something that you don't need & your bunny probably won't use.

This leads to my next topic.....

## BUNNIES SHOULD BE AN INDOOR PET:

In Australia, we think of bunnies as outdoor pets, but not many other western countries do.

In the wild rabbits spend most of their time underground in a burrow, where the temperature is stable all year round: Cool in summer, warm in winter. So if you put your bunny in a run/hutch outside how can it keep warm in winter & cool in our blazing summers? Bunnies don't like temperatures over about 23c so indoors is clearly a much better option & a cheaper one too.

Your bunny will also be safe from predators like, dogs, cats, foxes, owl & eagles.

A Bunny can die from fright so if they are inside they are less likely to be scared to death.

## YOU'RE BUNNIES HOME:

A bunny needs space & a Hutch is simply not enough.

Some second hand carpet, carpet tiles or kids rubber mats all make great bases, then add the entertainment.

Sea-grass mats, cardboard boxes, cat posts, old baby toys will all entertain your bunny.

Bunnies need a soft floor so that they don't get sore hocks, which happens if they are on a hard surface like timber, vinyl or concrete floors.

An area in the family room is ideal as your bunny will stay socialized and part of the family.

## TO DESEX OR NOT TO DESEX???

We have all heard of the saying “Breeding like Rabbits” well it is very true that rabbits will not only have large litters but many of them.

Unlike cats & dogs rabbits don't have a season, a female bunny (Doe) comes into season as soon as she smells an entire male bunny (Buck). A Doe can become pregnant again as soon as she has had a litter, aside from potentially hundreds of new bunnies, this is terribly bad for the Doe who won't live very long.

Once a bunny hits puberty, the boys like to “mark” everything they love & that may well include you, while the girls tend to get hormonal & grumpy, as they want babies which is what nature intended.

De-sexing will give you back that gorgeous bundle of fluff.