



## **Bunny Basics e-Book**

**by Lana Jordan**

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*Bunny Basics*  
*a guide to raising rabbits*



*by Lana Jordan*  
*...the Rabbit Lady*

## ~ Rabbit Care ~

Provide roomy cages relative to the size of the rabbit; 1" x ½" floor wire is ideal so that droppings can easily fall through, but rabbits' feet can't. Side wire can be 1" x 2" but should be smaller for does with litters.

Clean cages consistently to minimize the risk of disease. Rabbit pellets make excellent fertilizer and can be worked directly into your garden!

Pick a rabbit up by the loose skin at the back of the neck and support his bottom with your free hand, bringing him immediately to your chest so that he feels secure. If you dangle him in the air, he will panic and flail around. **DO NOT** pick rabbits up by their ears!



## ~ Feeding and Watering ~

Mix other grains such as rolled oats or sweet feed with your rabbit pellets at a ratio of 1 part grains to 4 parts pellets. Rabbits love this, and it's good for them, too! Carrots and cabbage make good treats when you want to give your rabbits something special.

Include hay in the diet of rabbits, particularly long-haired breeds such as Angoras. They need the roughage to help digest swallowed fur and prevent formation of hairballs in the stomach. Another such beneficial measure is one tablespoon of frozen pineapple juice concentrate mixed with a small amount of water once every two or three months. Fresh pineapple or packaged papaya enzyme tablets may also be used for this purpose.



**A wild bunny.**

Always make sure your rabbits have a fresh supply of water. Bowls are easier to maintain during winter months, as water bottles will freeze. In milder weather, the bottles are excellent as they cannot be knocked over and spilled, and need refilling less often than bowls. Clean watering dishes or bottles regularly to prevent the formation of harmful bacteria.

If you have a fenced yard, let your rabbit out occasionally so she can get some exercise and nibble on the fresh grass. (Keep an eye on her.)



## ~ Summer Care ~

Keep cages in shade during summer months; winter weather doesn't phase rabbits much, but the heat can literally kill them! For short-haired rabbits, you can dip their bodies in a small bucket of cold water on extremely hot days, making sure to massage it past the fur to the skin. Don't get water anywhere above the neck. Long-haired rabbits can be shorn for the summer; dipping them makes their wool matte.

Groom Angoras with a slicker brush regularly (every two weeks). Trim and shear as needed, always being careful not to cut the skin! Go slowly and cut any mats with the scissors turned away (vertical) from the rabbit's body first to separate thickness, then cut small amounts horizontally. When trimming in the vicinity of the tail section, ALWAYS locate and secure the actual tail with one hand while cutting unwanted wool/mats with the other. The rabbit would not appreciate having his tail nicked or cut!

Fill empty pop bottles with water and freeze, putting them in cages on hot summer afternoons. The rabbits will press against the frozen bottles to stay cool. A mister may also be used, or wet burlap draped across the cage for a swamp cooler effect. The danger of overheating is increased when two or more rabbits share a cage, as they tend to stick together, which makes body temperatures rise.

By the way...don't try to put adult rabbits in the same cage. If they're raised together, they'll get along; if not, they probably won't!

## ~ Breeding Rabbits ~

When mating rabbits, you should place the doe in the buck's cage only for a few minutes. Leaving the buck and doe together indefinitely is not recommended as this makes determining an exact due date difficult. Also, bucks have been known to eat or scatter litters and therefore should not be allowed in the cage with mother and young.

After a successful mating, calculate the due date (gestation is 31 days) and give the doe a nest box full of straw by day 28. Try to avoid moving or agitating the doe. Any changes in housing should be made prior to the last week of pregnancy.



Bred Angora does should not be groomed until after the bunnies are born; groom well before breeding. When the Angora pulls hair for the nest, cut it into fine pieces; long strands can get wrapped around babies' necks and strangle them.

In cold weather, excess Angora wool can be put in the nest boxes of short-haired rabbits for added warmth. Electric nest box warmers (used according to manufacturer's directions) are also recommended for winter breeding. Check on the baby bunnies every day, removing any dead ones and soiled nesting material immediately.



## ~ Conclusion ~

Rabbits are basically as loving and gentle as you make them. The more you pet and cuddle them, the more they will crave this kind of attention and respond accordingly. Likewise, rabbits who are neglected or seldom handled will become less sociable and trusting.

Males generally make better pets than females, since they tend to be mellower. Good luck and enjoy your new pet(s)!

For comprehensive information on all aspects of raising rabbits, visit [www.arba.net](http://www.arba.net) . Consult a veterinarian for regular rabbit care.

