



Gerbilmania

July, 2004

Welcome to Gerbilmania!

This newsletter is dedicated to the Mongolian gerbil, *Meriones unguiculatus*. These small, friendly, furry pets are not as well known as the more common hamsters and guinea pigs, but they deserve more attention! This newsletter will help you learn all about these wonderful pets and perhaps persuade you to give gerbils a try in your own home, classroom or workplace. Read on!

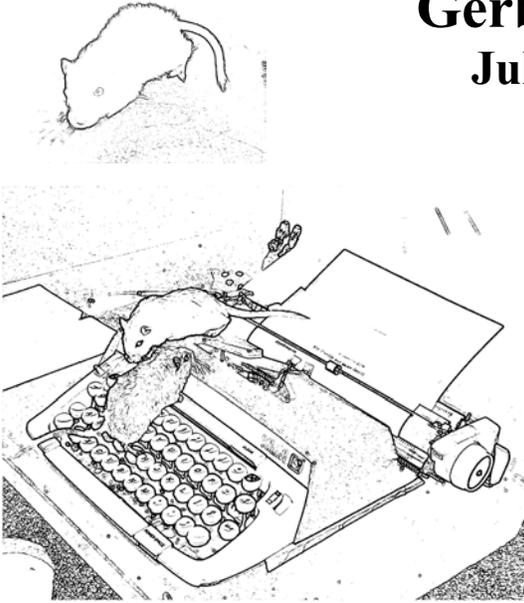
Getting Gerbils? Here's Your Shopping List.

When you're getting gerbils, there are a few items you need to buy first. So, we've made up a list that shows what local stores carry what items.

	Pet Supplies + 34 Cambridge St Burlington	Petco 51 Middlesex Tpk Burlington	Stop & Shop 337 Great Rd Bedford
Tank	X	X	
Water Bottle and Holder <i>OR</i>	X	X	
One Piece Water Bottle		X	
Food (min 14% protein)	X	X	X
Clips	X		
Lid	X		
Bedding	X	X	
Carefresh	X	X	
Corncob	X		X
Aspen	X	Sometimes	
Yesterday's News	X		
Chinchilla Bath Sand or Dust	X		

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Charlie and Sam,
I am a single gerbil whose best friend died last month. Now I spend all my time sleeping. What's wrong with me? What should I do?

Lonely Lilac

Dear Lonely Lilac,

Talk to your humans about your problems and ask them to get you two young friends so that they can be together when you are gone. It might take a while for you to get used to having new friends, so tell your humans to use a split cage. Put a screen down the middle of the tank. Then twice a day, they should switch you and your new friends from one side to the other, so you can see and smell each other but you can't touch them. After you're used to each others scent, your human can take out the screen. Make sure your human is around the day he takes out the screen in case you and your friends don't like each other after all. Meanwhile, try to chew more and if you have a wheel, run.

Best wishes,
Charlie and Sam

Quiz

Test your gerbil smarts! Circle one answer.

The best kind of gerbil bedding is pine or cedar. True or False.

Gerbils chew because they need to keep their teeth from growing too long. True or False.

Gerbils are nocturnal. True or False.

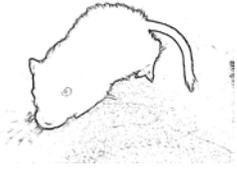
Gerbils like to live alone. True or False.

Gerbils come from Mongolia. True or False.

You have to clean gerbil cages every week. True or False.

Gerbils like to eat vegetables like lettuce. True or False.

Answers on page 4.



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Gerbil Autobiographies
Today's Feature: Thunderbolt



My owners got me from ABC Gerbils when I was young. They came to look for a breeding pair and they got me and my best friend, Pumpkin. I was to be the mother and Pumpkin the father. A little while later, my owners checked to see if I was a girl still andGuess What? I was a boy. My owners were pretty surprised, but they decided to keep me even though I was a boy because they had fallen in love. The past year has been busy for Pumpkin and me. We have stayed at two

different houses as ambassadors, showing families how much fun gerbils are. Also, Pumpkin and I went to the AGS New England show. We both were entered in the show, and I won a second place ribbon. Probably the most fun thing at the show was meeting all the other gerbils. I made a good friend named Titania and even met some Degus. Well, it was nice talking to you but I've got to run. My owner just turned out the light.

The 2004 NE Gerbil Show

Gerbil enthusiasts rushed from all over America to the 2004 NE Gerbil Show in Rutland, VT on Saturday, June 26. The show began with Health Checks. All gerbils entering the show had to be inspected for any signs of disease or illness. Once through Health Checks, the gerbils could not leave the show area. After the last gerbils passed through Health Checks, the judging began. People wandered around examining the various exhibits, buying raffle tickets and purchasing gerbils, gerbil toys or items. Soon after a delicious lunch, the pet class was judged.



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Gerbils were awarded 1st, 2nd and 3rd place ribbons. Pumpkin and Thunderbolt both won 2nd place ribbons. Also, of the 1st place winners, one female and one male were chosen Best in Show. This year, Odessa Maxwell's "Rockin M" Gerbils was awarded both Best in Show ribbons.

The Pet Class was judged in categories like "Cutest Face" and "Best Sleeper", while the main show was judged by temperament and color. Our gerbil, Charlie, won a first place ribbon in the pet class as best shoulder sitter and Sam won a second place for longest sitter. After the judging, there was celebratory dinner. Congratulations, all gerbils, you are all winners!

Answers to Quiz (No Peeking Unless You've Already Taken the Quiz!)

1. False. Gerbils can get sick if they live on pine or cedar bedding, so the best kind of bedding would be one of the beddings we listed on the Page 1.
2. True. All rodents' teeth grow throughout their lives, so you need to give them cardboard boxes and tubes so they can chew. Chewing helps gerbils wear their teeth down and provides exercise.
3. False. Gerbils wake up when you wake up. They take "cat naps" and when you enter the room, chances are they will wake up.
4. False. Gerbils SHOULD NOT live alone. In the wild, they live in groups and get depressed if kept alone.
5. True. Gerbils originally came from Mongolia.
6. False. Gerbil tanks do not need to be cleaned very often, and they do not get stinky fast. Once a month should do it.
7. True. Gerbils like to eat a lot of greens, so give them a little veggie every day if you can.



PLAYTIME!

When you go to the small animal aisle in the pet store, you see....plastic toys. We all think the toys are cute but, are they worth it? Should you buy plastic toys, or are cardboard boxes enough?

There are two reasons not to buy plastic toys. First, plastic toys can be dangerous. If a gerbil chews on a toy, a piece of plastic can get stuck in its stomach and kill it. Second, the gerbils chew them up just as fast as you can buy them! That's a waste of your money.

Next time you go to the pet store, take some time to think about your gerbil and your money before you buy a plastic toy.

RH