



Gerbilmania

August, 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!

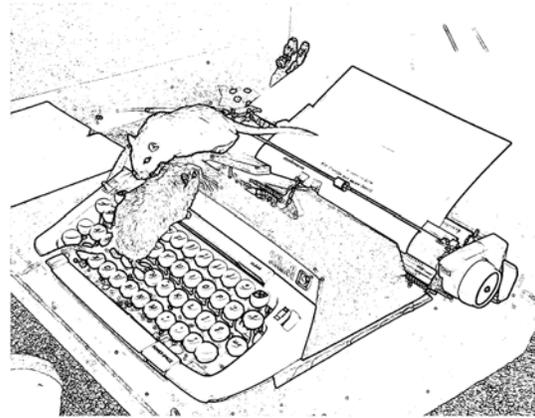


Gerbilariums

Whether your gerbils live at home or at school, a gerbilarium is a great project. A gerbilarium is a bunch of cardboard boxes that are connected. They are fun to make and fun for your gerbil to play in. Gerbilariums are cheaper than plastic toys. Also, the gerbils enjoy them more. It is like living in Chuck E. Cheese!

To make a gerbilarium you need only a few supplies: some boxes, a few tubes and glue.

First, brainstorm a few ideas for unique features of your gerbilarium (staircase, lookout platform, etc.) Next, take the boxes and tubes and put them in the tank in the arrangement that you want. (Make sure that your gerbilarium fits in the gerbil tank.) Then, using hot glue or Elmer's glue, glue your gerbilarium together. Use as little glue as possible. Add special features. Next, wait for the glue to dry. Then put your gerbilarium in the gerbil tank, add your gerbils and let the fun begin!



Letters to the Editor

Dear Charlie and Sam,
My fur is greasy and so is my mate's.
I like being clean so what should I do?

Big Guy



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Dear Big Guy,

What you need is a dust bath. Tell your human to buy some chinchilla bath dust or sand. Your human can put the sand in a corner or take a tub that microwavable frozen

macaroni and cheese comes in and wash it out. You can then use the tub as a bathtub.

Best wishes,
Charlie and Sam

Gerbil Autobiographies
Today's Feature: Tuna



I was adopted last August with my two brothers and my sister from Petco. I had been brought to Petco earlier that same day, so I wasn't pregnant. When my humans got me home, they separated me from my brothers and I stayed with my sister. We were adopted at about 7 weeks old, and now I am 1 year old. Recently, I even went to a home as an

ambassador. That was very fun. Well, that's just about it about me. Bye.

Genetics

All gerbils have genetics, including yours. If your gerbil has a pedigree, you can find your gerbils' genetics there. If you don't have a pedigree for your gerbil, you can find its' genetics by looking at the genetics of his or hers' parents and your gerbils color. But before you do that, you must understand gerbil genetics.

Before gerbils became pets, they lived in the wild. Then, the only gerbil color was Agouti. Agouti gerbils have a white belly and a brown back. There are black hairs in the fur on their back. This is called ticking. Agouti gerbils have all dominant genes, A* C* E* G* P*.



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A * means the gene can be dominant or recessive.

Dominant and recessive are like blue and brown eyes. If one parent has brown eyes, you can have brown eyes. But with blue eyes, both parents must have blue eyes for you to have blue eyes.

Therefore, blue eyes are recessive and brown eyes are dominant.

In gerbil genetics, capital letters are dominant and lowercase letters recessive. In the Agoutis' pedigree, all the letters are capitals so the Agoutis' genetics are all dominant. When scientists brought gerbils to the United States, breeders bred gerbils together until they saw new colors due to recessive genes. The first recessive seen was aa, which produced a black gerbil.

When it comes to the actual genetics, they are pretty simple once you get to know them. Below I have put a table for your convenience. Now just read the chart and then take a look at your gerbils genetics!

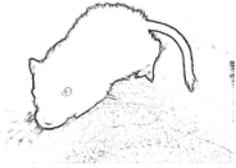
Shawsheen River Gerbils

Healthy, friendly gerbils bred for color variety and temperament. Hand-raised with lots of handling by kids.

Lifetime guarantee – if you cannot keep your gerbils, we will find them a new home.

gerbils@hannas.com

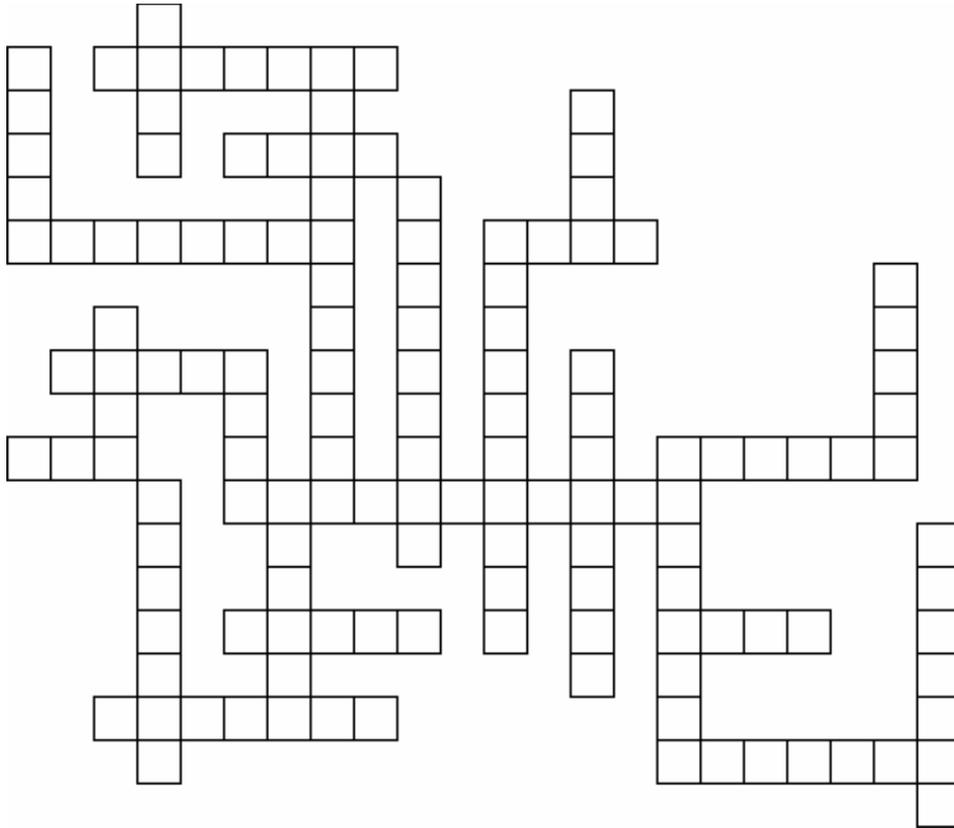
A, a	<i>The a gene removes the white belly and the yellow from the Agoutis' fur.</i>
C, cb, ch	<i>The cb gene lightens the body, leaving the nose, tail, feet, and ears dark (colorpoint). The ch gene makes the body even lighter. The C gene leaves full color.</i>
E, e, ef	<i>E means that the ticking is left in the coat. While e reduces the black in the coat. ef reduces the amount of black plus the color of the fur fades as the animal ages.</i>
G, g	<i>G means not grey and g removes yellow from the fur and makes all the black in the fur grey.</i>
P, p	<i>P is black eyes and p means pink eyes.</i>
Sp, sp	<i>Sp means spotted, and sp means not spotted. Gerbils with Sp Sp die in the womb.</i>



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Gerbilmania Puzzle



3 Letters
LID

4 Letters
CHEW
CUTE
FOOD
PIED
PUPS
TANK
TUFT

5 Letters
BOXES
LILAC
TUBES
WHEEL

6 Letters
AGOUTI
GERBIL

7 Letters
BEDDING
BURMESE
MOTTLED
SNUGGLE
SPOTTED

8 Letters
DUSTBATH
GENETICS
SCHIMMEL

9 Letters
CARDBOARD

10 Letters
COLORPOINT

11 Letters
SHOULDERSIT
WATERBOTTLE