



Brambleley Hedge

RABBIT RESCUE

HOPpenings

March - April 2011

Annual Easter Message

EASTER AND RABBITS DON'T MIX!

This time of year brings a lot of good things to us desert dwellers. The days get longer; temperatures are getting warmer. Blossoms and flowers begin to pop open, bringing splashes of color everywhere. If we are lucky enough to have some good rainfall during the early spring, wildflowers begin to carpet areas around Picacho Peak and the deserts are covered with a layer of lush, green grass.

Just as we can count on the return of spring every year, the annual combination of Easter and live domestic rabbits inevitably comes around. While the springtime can be very pleasant and enjoyable, Eastertime can be a very difficult and even deadly time for thousands of innocent bunnies. This is when shelters and rescues across the country are inundated with unwanted and abandoned rabbits who were unlucky enough to be obtained as Easter gifts. The big difference is that while the arrival of springtime is beyond our control, giving live animals as Easter gifts is a choice, and is entirely preventable.

Domestic rabbits have become the third most frequently surrendered animals to shelters and pounds. With all the perfectly healthy, adoptable rabbits languishing in shelters and ultimately euthanized because of a lack of suitable adoptive homes, it is really unconscionable to breed more rabbits into a world where there are already so many rabbits desperately seeking homes.

While young bunnies are irresistibly cute, people fail to understand that rabbits are living, highly sensitive creatures which require a commitment of 8-10 years over

their lifetime. They are not low-maintenance pets by any means, and they need socialization, playtime, and exercise even more than a lot of other animals. They are naturally curious creatures, made to run and jump and play, and keeping them locked in a small cage away from stimulation provided by family members is nothing short of cruel and inhumane. People would never lock a cat in an isolated cage or hutch - why would you do the same thing to a rabbit?

TAKE IT FROM NIGEL...



Give Chocolate Bunnies This Easter!

You can help spread the word about the unnecessary suffering that domestic rabbits have to endure every year for Easter. If you know of a friend or family member who may be thinking of purchasing a rabbit as an Easter gift, ask them if the person getting the gift is willing and able to provide a good, loving home for as long as a decade. Are they able to

provide food, water, a clean living area, a litter box, toys and medical care when needed? A young rabbit will grow into an adult, and they will need to be neutered or spayed to avoid territorial behavior. After the novelty of having a bunny wears off (and it most likely will), is someone going to assume the primary caregiving responsibilities?

So many innocent rabbits suffer a terrible fate this time of year, and education is the best way to combat it. Use this newsletter or information on the Internet, especially the House Rabbit Society website (www.rabbit.org). Together, we can stop the annual cruelty and misery brought about by the Easter holiday.

- Stephen Guida



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Lapine Lucy Explains the Holidays!

Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's Day, April Fools' Day and more - Lucy's Got The Answers!



"Lapine Lucy here...I'd like to share with you humans how bunnies think and feel about your holiday celebrations. Sure, we have Easter, when we can pick up shifts at the mall posing with your children & enjoy idol worship when chocolatiers imitate our form in their molds, but what about those other, non-rabbit-centric festivities?"
- as told to Wendy Frushon

Mardi Gras: We have a similar holiday in which we enjoy feasts and fun and dancing. It's called "today". We don't understand the whole "giving up something for 40 days" business - that's all on you. Just don't try to dress us up in those beads you got at the parade.

St. Patrick's Day: This day was about some saint in Ireland who was involved in banishing pesky snakes from the land. Our Irish brethren are grateful for that. Some Palomino rabbits claim to be "Irish," but we think they are playing along just to get more "native" greens.

April Fools' Day: This is a major holiday for BHRR rabbits, both past and present. 25 years ago today, the rabbit rescue so many of us have called or call home came into existence, with 2 rabbits picked up from a yard sale. We ain't foolin' on this one. As for playing practical jokes on our humans, we are more clever & we spread them out throughout the year. False pregnancies, empty cages, "lost" treats...we cover all the bases...

Earth Day: We celebrate this day with poop. It's a natural fertilizer. No GI stasis is allowed on this day. Also, we encourage our fellow rabbits to eat as their wild relations do & graze on untreated greens in the yard. Nature's bounty is enjoyed by way of apple pieces, banana chunks, & the occasional grape.

Easter: We appreciate a holiday that gives us the opportunity to market our lovely selves, but we honestly don't see the connection between this religious holiday and...us. So many of us are bought in pet shops around this time. Humans take us home when we are very young and they are not prepared. It's not a win-win situation at all. We love that BHRR has a moratorium on adoptions around this time. Helps to keep us out of the hands of the non-slaves!

FULL MOON WATCH

MARCH 19th:

The "Full Worm" Moon (Humans)



The "Eww, Don't Step On Them" Moon (Rabbits)

APRIL 18th:

The "Sprouting Grass" Moon (Humans)



The "Salad Bar" Moon (Rabbits)



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"I Found Baby Cottontails!"

What to do (and what NOT to do) if you find some Baby Cottontails

Springtime inevitably brings an increase of calls to Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue from people who have discovered a nest of baby cottontails on their property. Most are very concerned about the welfare of the babies and mistakenly assume they have been abandoned by their mother. They think the best thing to do is "rescue" the cottontails and bring them into their house. Often, that course of action, while laudable, is not in the best interest of the cottontails.

"Cottontails" are the common name for a species of small rabbits native to Arizona and the Southwest. They differ from jackrabbits, which are a totally different species and are notable for their larger size and enormous ears. They are VERY different from the domestic rabbits we keep as our companion animals. Cottontails are protected by Arizona Game and Fish department regulations and people are not permitted to keep them as pets.



Here are some things people assume about cottontails and the underlying facts:

- 1) **"I don't see the mother rabbit anywhere. The babies must be abandoned!"** The mother rabbit does not stay with the cottontail nest for long periods of time. In fact, she may stop by the nest once or twice a day for 15 minutes to nurse the babies. In a normal 24-hour day the mother will be with the babies for only a small period of time. This is what Nature intended and, unless you find strong evidence to the contrary, you should assume the mother rabbit will return to tend to her babies.
- 2) **"If I touch the babies the mother will not come near them."** Not true - you can pick up the babies and relocate them if they are in immediate danger where you found them. The mother will not smell "human" on them and run away.
- 3) **"The babies need to be rescued; I can feed them with a baby bottle."** The babies may very well NOT need to be rescued, and in fact, trying to feed them milk in a baby bottle can be very dangerous to them. If you don't know what you are doing, it's very possible the babies will "aspirate" (breathe the milk into their lungs) and die. Also, cow's milk and Kitten Milk Replacement (KMR) are not suitable for cottontails.

In cases where a litter of cottontails have lost their mother, then some kind of intervention must be done to feed them. This should best be left to wildlife experts who have had experience in caring for newborns. Even so, the survival rate for these bunnies, sadly, is fair at best. Keeping them with their mother is the very best option for the babies, and despite the natural tendency to "save" adorable little babies, very often the best course of action is to leave them where you found them, and let Nature take its course.

If you come across a litter of babies and need more information, call Ruth at 480-483-0130. There is a recorded announcement which will provide a wealth of information about what you should do.

- Stephen Guida



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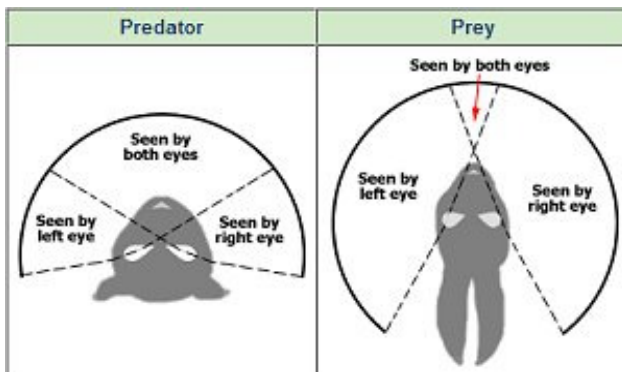
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Eyes On The Sides Of My Head

Often, when someone is meeting a rabbit for the first time, they will put their open hand directly in front of the rabbit's nose. Just as often, they will be startled by the rabbit's sudden and forceful pullback, as if the bunny was frightened very much by something. Why does the bunny react so strongly to the universal sign of friendliness between humans and domestic pets?

The answer is due to the fact that a rabbit is a prey animal. Everything about rabbits - from the way they act to how their bodies are constructed - are a direct result of that fact. One example is of this is the position of a rabbit's eyes on the sides of its head. This is to give them wide peripheral vision, to allow them to see approaching

predators from almost any direction. The cost of this excellent peripheral vision is that rabbits have a "blind spot" directly in front of their noses. They literally cannot see something right in front of their face, like a person's hand, and when they suddenly feel something there, they have an extreme startle reaction. Predator mammals, such as dogs and cats, have eyes on the front of their heads, and can see things clearly that are in front of them. As a trade-off, their peripheral vision is nowhere near as extensive as the rabbit's.



So when you meet a bunny for the first time, approach them with your hand from above or to the side of their head - not from right in front of their nose!

- Stephen Guida



Spotlight On HARLEQUINS



Our rabbit companions are all unique and undeniably special, and their individuality is observed in different personalities, energy levels, size, ear types, and coat colors and lengths. One of the most striking coat colorings is that of the harlequin rabbit, which takes its name from harlequin clowns that wear clothing in alternating opposite colors. Harlequin rabbits originated in France in the 1800s and come in two varieties: Japanese and Magpie. In a perfect harlequin, the colors are split down the middle of the rabbit starting with a straight line down the front of the face. In the Japanese harlequin, if the left side of the face is orange, the right side of the face would be a dark color. The ears would be opposite of this with the right ear orange, and the left ear dark. This pattern alternates back and forth throughout the whole rabbit, including the feet. Magpie harlequins are white and a dark color with the same pattern as the Japanese harlequin.



Harlequins are medium-sized rabbits ranging from six to nine pounds, with erect ears and a short coat that only requires the regular once-a-week brushing, except in shedding season when bi-weekly brushings are necessary. They have full, rounded bodies, long broad heads, and perfect "V" ears.

- Emilia Prosser



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RECENT ADOPTIONS

Benny
Candy
Cedric &
Chelsea
Choo Choo
Confetti
Digby
Dove
Fiona
Hunter
Marty
P.J.
Scotty
Snowdrop
Vinnie
Wally
Widdle
Wee Willie



ASK DOCTOR BUNSLEY

Dear Dr. Bunsley,

I've been hearing the humans here talk about something called "April Fool's Day" which is apparently some holiday where they can play a bunch of dumb, lame jokes on each other without getting beat up. I just know some of this stuff is going to turn out badly. What is up with this "April Fool's Day?"

Wary Willie

Dear Willie,

Humans need validation all the time, as you may have noticed, and they create holidays to reassure themselves they're doing the right thing. They created "Arbor Day" so they know it's okay to plant trees. They created "Thanksgiving" to make it okay to kill a bunch of turkeys and stuff their bums with old bread crumbs. Their "April Fools Day" (which we know as "Humans Being Human Day") is just something you have to put up with if you want the treats to keep on coming. Just stay out of their way during this time and if they don't kill each other, it will all be over in a day.

Dr. B

Bunny Laffs



Bunny Model: Mimosa

"Whoa - I had no idea they made tube tops that big!"

THE DOCTOR IS IN! Do you or your bunny have a care or behavior question for Dr. Bunsley? Email it to: hoppenings@bunnyman.net



There's always great shopping at the
BRAMBLEY HEDGE RABBIT RESCUE THRIFT STORE
14644 N. Cave Creek Rd., Phoenix, AZ
602-482-3990

Mon - Fri 11am - 4pm * Saturday 10am - 4pm * Closed Sunday
Huge Selection! Fantastic Prices! New Merchandise Daily!

Questions or Comments about this newsletter?
Email hoppenings@bunnyman.net

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