



Brambleley Hedge

RABBIT RESCUE

HOPpenings

March - April 2010

TO ADOPT OR NOT ADOPT

Talking to people about adopting rescue animals



Getting a new companion animal can be a very exciting time for anyone who loves animals. Once you decide on a rabbit, then you get to choose the breed, gender, fur type, color - a million exciting choices! Possibly one of the most important choices to make is whether to adopt a rescue animal from a shelter or pound or to purchase one from a breeder or a pet store. Animal shelters and rescues all across this country are overflowing with perfectly wonderful rabbits who are literally dying for a home. Still, in spite of the great need, some people still choose to get their next companion animal from a breeder or a pet store.

Maybe you know some of these people. They may be a family member, friend or co-worker. What do you say to them when they mention they plan on going to a breeder on Craig's List or to a feed store? Here are some "talking points" to gently engage them in conversation, dispel some misconceptions about shelter animals and help them make a better choice.

"If they're in a shelter, there's something wrong with them."

Nothing could be further from the truth. Rabbits get turned into shelters and rescues for many different reasons, most of which have nothing to do with the rabbit. Families lose their homes and can't take their rabbits to their new place. Marriages and divorces happen; elderly owners pass away; children get bored and lose interest. Some people have unrealistic expectations of them. These rabbits are perfectly wonderful companions and wind up in shelters and rescues through absolutely no fault of their own.

"I can't go to the shelter because it's too depressing, and I want to take them all home."

It's tough to see a lot of rabbits waiting for adoption in a shelter, but instead of thinking of shelters as terrible, sad places, it helps to think of them as places of hope and healing. Places where innocent, loving rabbits are given a second chance at life, where they can receive medical care, a proper diet, and maybe the first kind human touch they have felt in a very long time. Adopting a shelter rabbit makes you a part of that wonderful, miraculous process.

"Pedigree rabbits are always better."

Not necessarily true. Depending on the breeder, some pedigree rabbits suffer a significant amount of inbreeding which can result in chronic illnesses, behavioral problems and shortened life spans. A mixed breed rabbit can be extremely beautiful and unique, combining the best qualities of several breeds, and can make absolutely wonderful companions.

"I tried to adopt from a shelter, but they asked too many questions."

Rescue organizations like Brambleley Hedge Rabbit Rescue have a robust adoption screening process which we use to make sure the prospective adopter is fully aware of the responsibilities and commitment required to care for a rabbit over an 8 to 10 year life span. We don't do this to annoy people or discourage them from adopting, but to ensure the rabbit goes to the best possible home and lives a long, happy life with their new family.

"I might want to breed my rabbit someday, and shelters neuter and spay their rabbits."

True, responsible shelters and rescues do neuter and spay their rabbits before adoption. Unnecessary breeding by

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irresponsible owners is one of the main contributors to the critical rabbit overpopulation problem and is the reason why shelters are constantly overcrowded. Also, rabbits are neutered and spayed for important reasons other than reproductive control, such as resolving behavioral issues like aggression and territory marking. In particular, unspayed female rabbits are at significant risk of developing uterine and ovarian cancers, and spaying eliminates this risk.

"Someone has to buy the rabbits in the pet store."

This is probably one of the worst reasons of all. Breeders breed enormous numbers of rabbits to stock pet stores, feed stores and other outlets while countless thousands of homeless rabbits are euthanized in shelters and pounds across the country. These breeder rabbits are merely "product" to the suppliers, and if there were no demand (i.e. "profit") for their product, they would not supply them.

In a perfect world all rabbits would be wanted and cared for by loving families and Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue could close its shelter. Until that day comes, please do all you can to encourage people you know who are looking to add a companion animal to their family to consider adopting a rescue rabbit from a shelter.

- Stephen Guida

BHRR's ANNUAL EASTER ADOPTION MORATORIUM

What it is and why we do it

For the past 20 years, BHRR has instituted a moratorium on rabbit adoptions shortly before Easter, to discourage those seeking to adopt a bunny for purely holiday-related reasons.

Much like the Snuggie left in the corner of the bedroom, or the Chia Pet that remains in the box in the garage, many rabbits bought during this time are impulse buys, to sate a child's desires to have a "bunny-wunny" now that he or she remembers that they exist with all of the advertising of Easter products during the weeks preceding Easter. The relative naivety of those who have not researched having a rabbit as a companion animal is matched most times with frustration & annoyance once a bunny's less desirable traits (digging, chewing, etc.), especially those of a youngster rabbit, are brought to the fore, in the weeks following bringing Bunny home. This is not the ideal situation for Bunny, new family, or rabbit rescue, since many rabbits are either turned in, dumped in the "wild", or doomed to a life inside a cage 24/7 come spring. The moratorium, which starts at least a week before Easter, was established to prevent all said scenarios.

Of the dozen or so inquiries that BHRR receives regarding rabbit adoption in the moratorium period, about 4 or 5 remain interested after the holiday fervor has ended, according to Erika Smith Royal, who runs the rabbit rescue. For those who are willing to wait, one (or more!) of our wonderful rabbits needing their forever home can be theirs to love & cherish.

This year, Easter falls on Sunday April 4, and there will be no rabbit adoptions on Saturday April 3.

- Wendy Frushon

NIGEL Says...



Easter and Rabbits Don't Mix!

Brambley Hedge Rabbit Rescue supports the annual Make Mine Chocolate campaign. For more information go to:

<http://www.makeminechocolate.org>



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Bunny HOROSCOPES

With the help of Celeste, Fortune, & Juno, sage rabbits in our shelter, we were able to assemble this ancient wisdom to commemorate the zodiac new year, on March 21st:

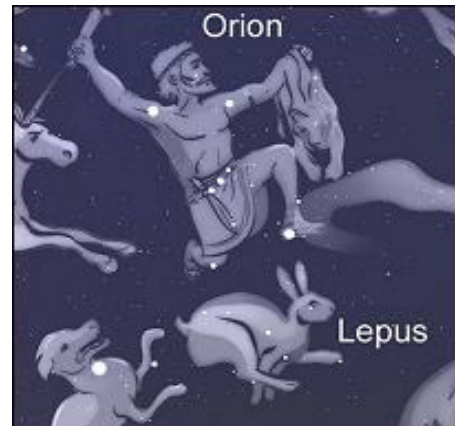
The **Aries (March 21-April 19)** rabbit knows it's all about him or her. It is. Headstrong, fearless, & full of teeth (ahem), this rabbit is the Evel Knievel of the bunch. Stock up on Polysporin & gauze. Motto: "I'm not waiting for ANYTHING!"

Taurus (April 20-May 20) bunnies will sometimes even look like the Bull – head down with ear tips leaning forward. Stubborn as the day is long & slower than molasses, this bun likes to take things nice & easy, a true creature of comforts. Motto: "Hand over the pellets, and no one gets hurt!"

Funny **Gemini (May 21-June 20)** bunnies will excel at looking as if they are running back to their cage/pen...then darting in the opposite direction at the last minute. Tricksters to their core, their curious minds won't mind chewing on the pages of whatever you are reading. Motto: "If I dig deep enough, there may be a carrot or a cookie down there!"

Cancer (June 21-July 23) rabbits are all about food, family, & home. Moody as the Moon, with sensitive tummies to match, their special trait is a need to be needed – so call their sitter every day if you go away & talk with your little bun ;oP Motto: "A treat can solve anything."

The **Leo (July 24-August 22)** bunny usually has awesome fur, a show bunny attitude, & confidence to match. Not afraid to be the center of attention when friends come to visit, this rabbit will, however, remain fiercely loyal to its slave, I mean, "owner". Motto: "And the Binky Award goes to..."



Fastidious **Virgo (August 23-September 22)** rabbits will not be caught without something to fuss with in his or her area, even if it's you (nip nip!). Picky eaters with hypochondriac tendencies, the Virgin bunnies are sensitive to being corrected, about anything (we all know people like this too!). Motto: "Grooming is next to godliness."

Libra (September 23-October 22) buns are sweet, pretty, and a tad manipulative - and why not, when you look this good? They need a mate – another bunny, you, a stuffed animal – anyone will do. Music soothes their souls. Motto: "Life is meant to be shared...but can I have your banana chip, darling?"

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Sassy **Scorpio (October 23-November 21)** rabbits are intensely intense. You know exactly what they want, what they love, what they hate...and strangely enough, you accept it! Since he or she is secretive to the core, check his or her litterbox & pet bed for hidden leftover treats. Motto: "Why is hump day only ONE day of the week?"

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21) is the zodiac sign associated with rabbits, & the Sag bun represents well. A happy pet that needs lots of space to burn off energy, this friendly bunny is independent & will make you laugh at its silliness. Motto: "Have 4 paws, will travel."

Rabbits born under the sign of **Capricorn (December 22-January 19)** come from regal lineage, or so they would like you to think. Like Libra, they have a manipulative bent, but this sign is more calculating & cold about it...like bringing the treat tin to you, then thumping until you open it. Motto: "I believe I requested Romaine lettuce in my salad...& has the Evian been properly chilled?!?"

Contrarian **Aquarian (January 20-February 18)** rabbits are all about friendships, not bunny love. Your Aquarian furball can live without you, which may sting, but they are fun to watch, since how often do you see lightning? Motto: "Cages are so 2009. Pens are where it's at."

Pisces (February 19-March 20) bunnies make the choice daily to be a saintly rabbit or a sinner bun. You can almost see them making this choice about everything..."Do I run into the room I'm not supposed to, or do I stay here?" "Do I chew the cord or pretend it's not there?" They sense when you aren't in the mood for bad bunny behavior, & usually they act accordingly. Motto: "Peace on Earth, for all bunnies...oh, to live in a world where we no longer need to thump or nip!"

- by Celeste, Fortune and Juno, as told to Wendy Frushon



Lionheads are one of the newest breeds of domestic rabbits. There are two opinions regarding the origination of the Lionhead rabbit. One theory is that the Lionhead originated in Belgium as the result of crossbreeding between the Swiss Fox and Belgian Dwarf rabbits. Crosses into a smaller wool type breed were then made, and later, the breed was imported into England where it continued to be crossbred with small rabbits and wool breeds. The second theory is that some European breeders were working on the Dwarf Angora and that the Lionhead mutation occurred in a litter and was accidentally spread throughout the Dwarf Angora breed. Regardless, the first Lionhead rabbits were imported to the U.S. in 1999.

Lionheads get their name from the mane they grow that looks similar to the mane of a lion. Manes can be single or double. Double maned lionheads have the regular manes, but have a thick "skirt" of wool. Interestingly, the gene that causes the mane need only be present in one parent to produce the mane in the offspring. Lionheads can be found in almost any color or color combination. They have rounded heads and are small in size, usually between 2.5 and 3.5 pounds. Lionheads also tends to have slightly shorter ears than most breeds and the ears do not exceed three inches in length.

Like all long haired breeds, Lionheads are susceptible to 'wool block' and preventative measures need to be taken to ensure their health, such as providing plenty of hay. Several Lionheads are available for adoption at the rescue, such as Farrah (above left) and Durante (above right). Call the Hopline at 480-443-3990 for more information.

- Tina Tegtmeyer



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RECENT ADOPTIONS

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 Roslin
 Rudd
 Talia
 Whitney



ASK DOCTOR BUNSLEY

*Dear Dr. Bunsley,
 My family thinks I am strange because I'm always looking in the litter box of my rabbit, Cornelius. They roll their eyes when I tell them all about his big, healthy pellets. I know Cornelius appreciates it; he looks at me as if he understands. How can I make my family understand?*

Possibly Over-Observant Person

Dear POOP,
 You are doing the right thing, because what goes on inside the litter box indicates what's going on inside the bunny. A healthy bunny is always worth your family thinking you are mental. Keep up the good work!
 Dr. B

*Dear Dr. Bunsley,
 My human creeps me out a little; she gets real overjoyed when she looks in my litter box. I try to tell her, "Lady, keep the treats coming and I'll make you the happiest human on earth." She tells the other humans and they think it's T.M.I. How can I get her to dial it back a little?*

Cornelius

Dear Corny,
 You can't - it's their job and it gives their lives meaning and purpose. Relax and enjoy it.
 Dr. B

Bunny Laffs



"No, I haven't seen your eyeliner pencil. Why do you ask?"

Bunny Model: Miss P

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



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BRAMBLE HEDGE RABBIT RESCUE THRIFT STORE
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BRAMBLE HEDGE RABBIT RESCUE is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) IRS-approved domestic rabbit no-kill shelter and rescue organization. We have been saving the lives of unwanted and abandoned rabbits since 1986. We rely solely on donations and accept no public funding. Find out how you can help us save more bunnies by visiting our website:
<http://www.bhrabbitrescue.org/links/fundraise.htm>

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