

Focus Pet



NUTRITION

My pet's diet is (kind of food, amount given daily):

My pet's favorite treats are:

HEALTH

My pet's vet or clinic is:

List of vet visits (dates, reason):

Describe any health issues:

TRAINING

Describe any training attempts with your pet (*if applicable*) (successes, failures, ongoing methods, lessons learned):

OTHER MAINTENANCE NEEDS

Describe any other needs of your pets (bathing, playtime or socialization, temperature requirements, rest time, habitat cleaning routine, materials for chewing or nesting, supplements such as cuttlebone or vitamin C, depending on species):

EXPENSES

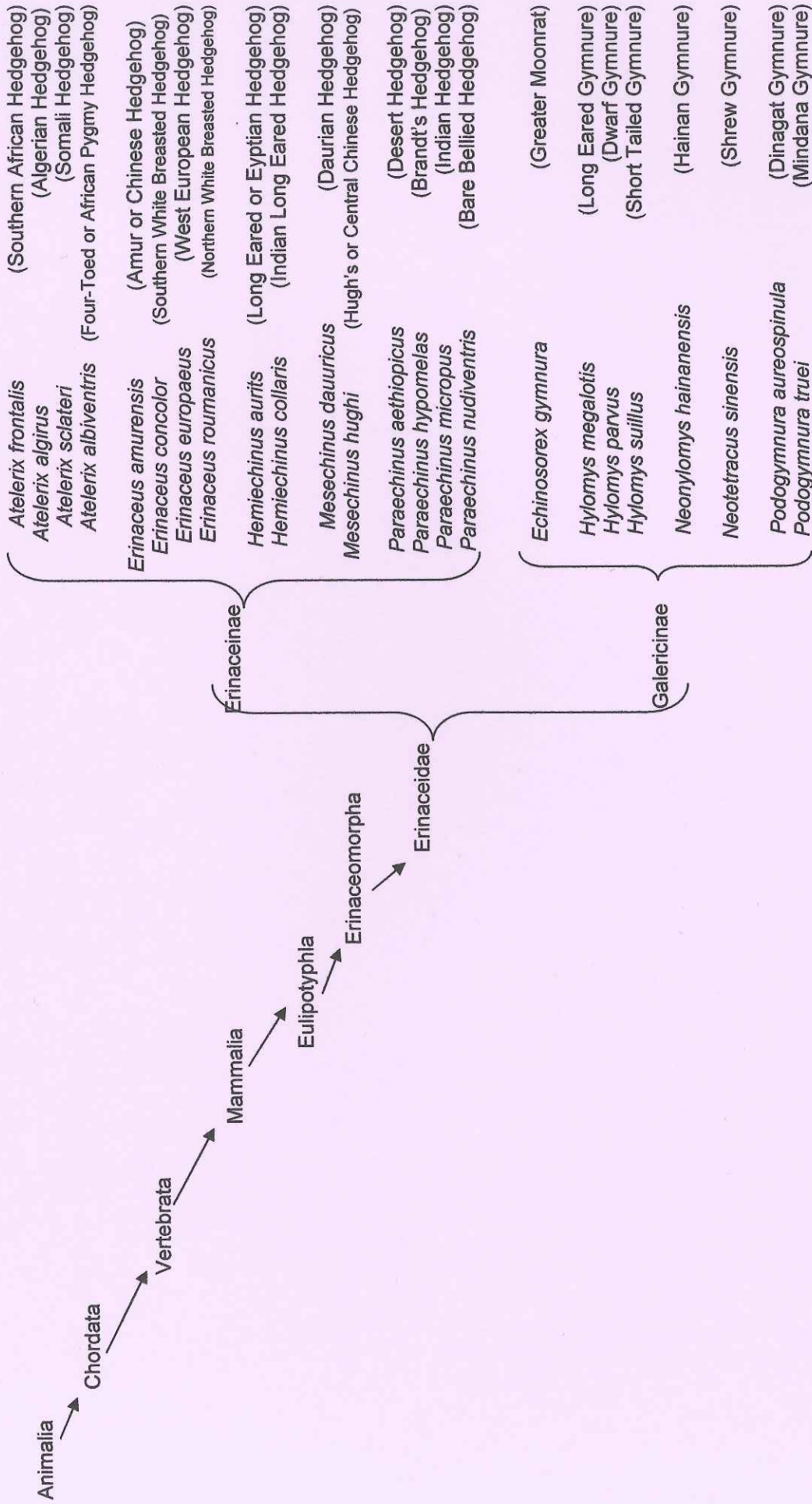
<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Price</i>

2011



Advanced Activity – Latin Classification of Hedgehog

Kingdom Phylum Subphylum Class Order Suborder Family Subfamily Genus Species (Common Name)



Sources : (primary) animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu – Univ. of Michigan Museum of Zoology
english.turkebilgi.com – an encyclopedia
nhc.ed.ac.uk – University of Edinburgh, Scotland
researchlimpopo.com – Mogaladwena Research Centre, Africa

(others) hedghogz.co.uk – Hedghogz website
seaworld.org – SeaWorld
britannica.com – Encyclopedia Britannica

QUILL

My squishy little Pokey,
On the defensive, he's a snuffling ball,
 with ever inch covered in sharp spines.
"Undomesticated", he doesn't know affection
 towards me, but there's a bond nonetheless.
Seemingly not built for climbing, he manages the front step,
 a basket, and nay other obstacle he wishes.
When he's awake, off he goes exploring the yard.
Those little feet can have him disappeared into
 some hidden nook in no time!
He'll pace restlessly in his cage until taken out.
Burrowing under the blankets of my bed,
 he soon settles into sleep,
 cozily by my ankle.
Alone, he'll flatten out spread-eagled:
 a round fat body with four toothpick legs
 and pointed snout sticking out.
On my lap, he is most comfortable,
 that adorable sleepy Pokey.

*Advanced Activity – Comparison of wild vs. domestic individuals of one species***MONGOLIAN GERBIL***Meriones unguiculatus*

Origin: the desert steppes of Xilinhot, Inner Mongolia

First captured for study: 1935

Entered the pet trade: 1960s

<u>Wild</u>	<u>Domestic</u>
Camouflage-coloration of browns	20 color mutations with variations
Do not tame easily	Readily tamed, even if not handled young (generally)
Larger ears, longer heads	More compact heads
Thicker fur for the desert cold	Thinner fur due to regulated indoor temperatures
Prominent tail tuft	Tail evenly furred
Strongly communal with complete families and multiple generations	Still communal, but due to controlled breeding, the strong ties between both sexes & generations may have weakened (personal hypothesis)
Family ranges of 3,788 – 16,684 ft ² , consisting of several burrows	Typical cage space of 16 inches by 9 inches
Heeds the predator warnings of each other & neighboring ground squirrels	Little real danger in captivity; no indirect communication with other species
Forage for grass seeds & roots, will keep storage	Consumes a mixed-seed diet or commercial food; may keep caches of food in cage

Mongolian gerbils were first recorded in the wild in 1866 by a French missionary. He sent specimens to a natural history museum in Paris, where they were given their official Latin name during the next year. The value as laboratory animals were explored in 1935 with the first capture, by a Japanese scientist. The twenty pairs he caught are the ancestors of virtually all domestic gerbils. Current bloodlines were updated with wild bloodlines perhaps only once or twice since. Japanese lab gerbils were imported into America by a scientist in 1954. Gerbils were of value to the scientist because they are similar to other rodents, reproducing quickly and easily, and live longer than mice and rats. Eventually surplus gerbils entered the pet trade in the mid-1960's.

Wild gerbils do not ever really become tame, but successful generations do. They are both nocturnal and diurnal, which allows them to quickly adjust to their owners' schedules and interact with their owners. They are curious, eager to investigate their owner's hand or play area or a newly-offered treat. Due to their rapid reproductively, it is not practical to allow them to stay in family communities in one cage. A cage may contain one or more generations, but usually of the same sex. This does break up or prevent the bonds of mated-for-life that occurs in the wild.

Wild gerbils live in burrows in a sandy desert. Domestic gerbils spend their awake hours in activity, re-arranging the nest and bedding materials. Would domestic gerbils still create burrows in the sand? As a junior high science fair experiment, I put the theory that they still would to the test. I filled an aquarium half-full of sand, slightly dampened to hold together. At that time, I had one gerbil left after her family had died of old age, named Karana. She spent a month in the aquarium, and never once did any digging or burrowing. I was very surprised, as in her cage she was always digging and scratching in the corners, clearing away the wood shavings. Now I wonder, was it the kind of sand, or did being alone make a difference? Perhaps in her cage she was not "burrowing", but seeking to escape, since her wild ancestors have many feet of territory, and her territory could be measured in inches. The burrowing instinct may simply no longer exist in domestics, but without more testing, we may never know.

Other Current Pets



Tak - shaft-tailed finch
Tanek - society finch
Loki - green/yellow budgerigar
Rikish - blue budgerigar

In Loving Memory





Previous Activities



What Should I Use? A Study of Cage Litters

There are many brands, and even more formulation types, of materials that can be used for bedding/litter purposes. This comparison looks at the five most common materials, represented by the easiest-found brands.



Wood Shavings

Most common in usage & availability
Least absorbent, least odor control
Biodegradable
Some dust
Wood oils may be irritating to some animals

Paper-based, Fluffy

Quickly becoming as mainstream as wood shavings
Made of recycled paper fibers
Almost no dust
Biodegradable, flushable in small amounts
Soft texture, good for any caged animal, even birds & reptiles
Sterilized, good odor control
Absorbs 3x its weight in liquids



Paper-based, Pellets

Different sizes for different animals
Made from recycled newspapers
Biodegradable, dispose of in trash
Smooth, hard texture
Dust free, unless it becomes wet and re-dries
Absorbs 3x the liquids than wood shavings
Very good odor control

Wheat-based

Made from wheat grains
Due to the wheat starch, it is the only clumping litter that is not made from clay
Wheat enzymes neutralize odor
Appears to contain dust
Very fine crumbly texture
Good for baby birds, safe for digging rodents
Supposedly recommended for rabbits, but I'm concerned that rabbits might try to eat it
Biodegradable

Corn-cob-based

Biodegradable
Dust free
Texture is small crumbles
Made from a plant by-product (corn-cobs)
* Must use a sterilized brand - in unsterilized corn-cobs the *apiragylis* fungus can grow with the slightest amount of moisture; it's invisible but sickens or kills dwarf hamsters



The variety of litter products in the market indicates how important pets are to Americans. All are made from renewable resources, often from recycled products or by-products. All are non-toxic and can be used for nearly any caged pet, but most are better suited for one situation than another. When choosing a product for an animal's environment, safety and effectiveness must be priority considerations, yet affordability is also an important consideration. Comparing prices was challenging to the point that it was almost impossible to calculate an equal comparison, due to all packaging being measured different ways. Materials are packaged by pounds, liters, and cubic inches or feet. Pricing between stores of the same product usually amounted to a difference of cents; never more than a dollar or two difference. My opinion is that the corncob-based Kaytee Kay-Kob brand is most expensive, and a bale of wood shavings from a feed store is cheapest.

I am very satisfied with Carefresh. It is soft for small animals to walk and sleep on, and due to its absorbency, odors are not noticeable and it doesn't have to be changed out completely from the cage as often as wood shavings. I really like the idea of the wheat-based and corncob-based, but think that a small animal like a hedgehog will be most comfortable on fluffy paper-based bedding/litter.

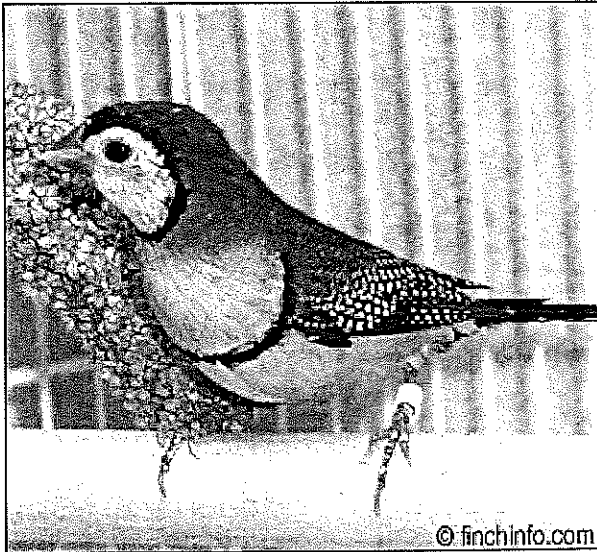
RESEARCH



The Owl (Bicheno) Finch

OWL FINCH^{8,11,12,13,14,22,23}

POEPHILA BICHENOVII OR
TAENIOPYGIA BICHENOVII, 2 SUBSPECIES



Grass finch

Hardiness:	Hardy when acclimatized
Reproduction:	Prolific
Singing ability:	Average (scroll down to find song clips)
Compatibility:	Passive, mixes well with other passive species [Compatibility Chart]
Size:	4" (10 cm)
Approx. cost:	\$80-\$100 (US) per bird

Other common names

- Owl Finch, Owl-faced Finch, Bicheno Finch, Bicheno's Finch, Double-bar Finch, Double-barred Finch
- *P. b. bichenovii*: White-rumped Owl, Banded Finch
 - *P. b. annulosa*: Black-rumped Owl, Black-ringed Finch, Ringed Finch

Origin

Australia

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Article printed from http://www.finchinfo.com/birds/finches/species/shaft-tail_long-tailed_grassfinch.php

Home > Birds > Finches > Species

The Shaft-tail Finch

SHAFT-TAIL FINCH 8, 11, 13, 14, 22, 23

POEPHILA ACUTICAUDA

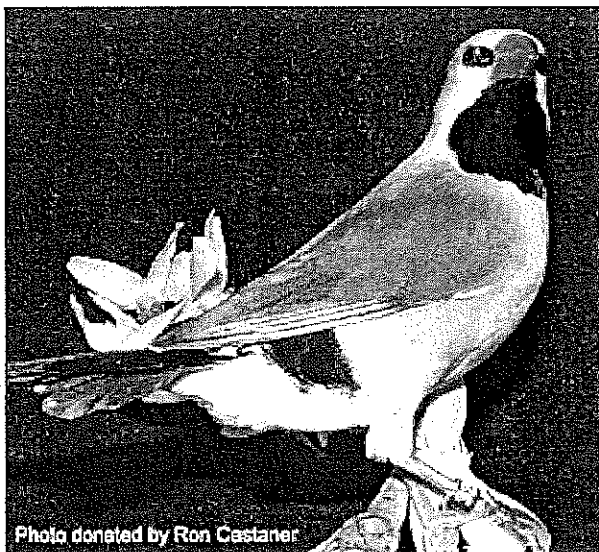


Photo donated by Ron Castaner

Grassfinch

Hardiness:	Hardy
Reproduction:	Prolific
Singing ability:	Somewhat pleasant
Compatibility:	Pushy, mixes well with other pushy species [Compatibility Chart]
Size:	5-6" (12.7-15 cm)
Approx. cost:	\$120-180 (US) per pair

Other common names

Shafttail, Black-heart Finch, Black-heart

- *P. a. acuticauda* (yellow-billed variety): Long-tailed Grassfinch, Long-tailed Finch
- *P. a. hecki* (red-billed subspecies): Heck's Grassfinch, Heck's Grass-finch, Heck's Shaft-tail Finch

Origin

Australia

Area of distribution

Steve's Eggfood Recipe

*extension of
Chicago
his birds' sex*

Grassfinch Aviary
birdhop@aol.com

This is the eggfood recipe that I feed all my birds either every day or every other day. It's basically geared towards conditioning breeding birds and feeding nestlings. When birds are not breeding I cut out some of the protein (egg) and increase the veggies. Australian finches being more "domesticated" need less protein than African varieties. I use a mini-chopper/blender to finely chop the vegetables up and also to blend all of the ingredients together. If it is too "wet" add more yellow eggfood.

- 1 large carrot
- 1/2 cup broccoli florets
- 1/4 can well drained corn
- 1 hard boiled egg, shell included
- 4 teaspoons of yellow eggfood (Petamine ,Feast, Protein 25 or other)
- 1 heaping teaspoon Feast Insectivourus mix from Tammy at www.justbirdstuff.com)
- 1/2 teaspoon Bee Pollen

When birds are feeding chicks a good way to improve health and vigor in the nestlings is to chop up 15 - 20 large mealworms on top of the eggfood mixture. In the wild many birds (especially african varieties), feed nothing but insects for the first week or so. When in season chopped grasshoppers are also relished by many species. This will also bring many finches into breeding condition as well.

Appearance

There are at least 80 known species of gerbil, but the most common species kept as a pet is the **Mongolian gerbil** (*Meriones unguiculatus*). Gerbil species differ from one another mostly by size but may also require different care, depending on the species in question.

Size: Mongolian gerbils measure about 9" (23 cm) in length, including their long, fur-covered tails, which help them keep their balance when they sit up and aid them in leaping and turning when pursued by a predator. (Other gerbil species may be larger or smaller than the Mongolian gerbil.)

Natural History

Understanding the physiology and behavior of wild gerbils can be helpful when interacting with your pets, because domestic gerbils still retain many of their instinctual traits and physical attributes.

Gerbils in the Wild

Mongolian gerbils are native to the cold desert and semi-arid grasslands of Mongolia and northeastern China. Very hot summers and very cold winters are typical of their natural habitat, so pet gerbils are well adapted to extreme temperature fluctuations between night and day as well as to the changing seasons. Wild gerbils live in vast networks of underground burrows, foraging for food and storing their findings for later use. (Pet gerbils often burrow in their enclosures and keep a **pantry** of stored food items.) Their acute senses help them evade predators in the wild but also result in their somewhat skittish temperament as pets.

Domestication

Gerbils have been bred in captivity for more than 70 years. They began domestic life as laboratory animals. In 1935, a Japanese scientist seeking a new species for his research studies caught 20 pairs of wild Mongolian gerbils from the Amur River Basin, on the border of China and Russia. They bred readily in captivity and proved useful in the laboratory. Breeding pairs were sent to the United States in 1954, but gerbils did not become available as pets in North America until 1964. Since then, their inquisitive nature, calm demeanor, and clean habits have made them increasingly popular pets.

Gerbil Behavior

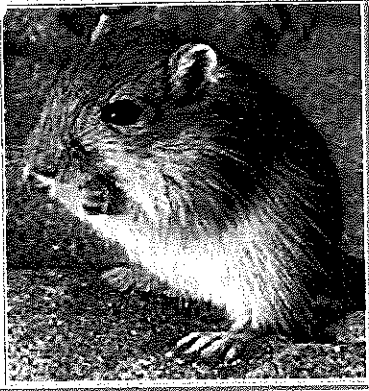
Gerbils are social rodents who live in family groups in the wild. They have many interesting **communicative behaviors**: for example, gerbils speak with one another by squeaking and thumping their back legs. Friendly behavior among gerbils includes sniffing noses or mouths and nudging their heads beneath each other's rumps. Family members also groom one another as a sign of affection.

Body Language

Understanding your gerbils' **body language** will help you to be more sensitive to their needs and moods, which in turn helps you better care for them. The following chart outlines some common gerbil gestures and what they're likely to mean if you observe them in your own pets.

Gerbil Behavior	What It Means
Sitting stiffly with paws held tightly in front of the chest, rapid grooming	Nervousness
Defecation, flattening close to the ground, biting	"Fight-or-flight" responses that indicate your gerbil feels threatened
Bouncing, softly	Contentment

Genus: Meriones
Species: unguiculatus



The Mongolian Gerbil is light brown with black tipped hairs and its under fur is gray. They are the size of any pet gerbil. They live in burrows with sandy soil and a little bit of grass, herbs and shrubs. They eat seeds, roots, vegetables and drink water. When they eat seeds, they spread them to different areas and make new plants in that area.

In the gerbil family there are 2 to 17 gerbils, but there are more males than females. They live together by age. For example, the older ones live with the older ones and the younger ones

live with the younger ones. In the family, older gerbils take care of the younger gerbils and males take care of the females.

Mongolian Gerbils live in harsh conditions but do not have many enemies. When ever they come across an enemy, they use their strong legs so they can jump really high to escape the enemy or they can use their strong legs to help them dig really fast to escape the enemy.

They do not have much competition with getting their food because all the other animals that eat what they eat are smaller than them.

They are not well spread around the steppe, but they are not endangered

Common Name: Jird - Mongolian Gerbil

Other Common Names: Domestic Gerbil

Scientific Name: *Meriones unguiculatus* (Full Taxonomy)

Group: Gerbil

Origin or Range: Mongolia

Relative Size: Smaller Than Average [?]
(as compared to other rodents)

Average Lifespan: 4 year(s)

Compatibility: Non-Aggressive [?]
(as compared to other rodents)

Category: Mammals » Rodents

Animal Description:

The Mongolian Gerbil is the best known, and most widely kept pet Gerbil around the world today. With their social, curious behavior it is no surprise that these fuzzy little creatures have been delighting children and adults for years.

The Mongolian Gerbil is an intelligent and highly social creature, which is greatly at ease interacting with humans. Their intelligent behavior allows each individual Mongolian Gerbil to express his unique personality. Out of all gerbils the Mongolian Gerbil is the most suitable and most widely kept. In the wild, the Gerbil is a burrowing creature and therefore his cage should have burrowing materials. Good commercial bedding is sold for hamsters and gerbils.

The Mongolian Gerbil's wild type color is agouti. Agouti means he is golden brown with a black ticked fur pattern. This pattern is Agouti. Because he has been kept and raised domestically for decades, many new color morphs have appeared. Some of these include; a medley of argente varieties of golden, cream, agouti variations of golden, gray, and colourpoint. In addition the Mongolian is also seen in white varieties such as the dark tailed, pink eyed white, ruby eyed white and dark eyed white, as well as other standard colors such as dove, nutmeg, blue fox, lilac, black, blue, sapphire, dark eyed honey, and white bellied cream. There are still more color variations of this wonderful gerbil. Overall there are 20 different color mutations. The Mongolian Gerbil typically weighs between four and five ounces at maturity and will generally grow to almost six inches in length. The Mongolian Gerbil is generally less expensive to purchase than other less common varieties.

Originating in Mongolia, the predecessors of today's domestic Mongolian Gerbil were first captured in the wild in 1935. They were first introduced into the United States about 30 years ago. In the wild the Mongolian Gerbil lives in the Xilinhot area of Mongolia. This area is a tropical steppe with thin grassy covering, herbs, shrubs and sandy soil. Wild gerbils eat primarily roots and seeds. Since the domestic Mongolian Gerbil has been kept for many years there are some differences between the wild type and the domestic. They wild type are not as easy to handle, they have larger eyes, longer ears and heads, and they have darker feet and display more yellow on their bellies. In addition the wild type has a more prominent tail tuft and thicker overall fur.

Specific Care Information:

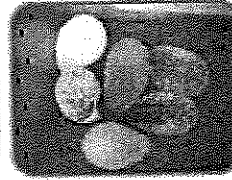
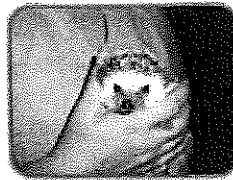
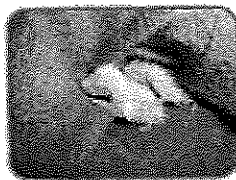
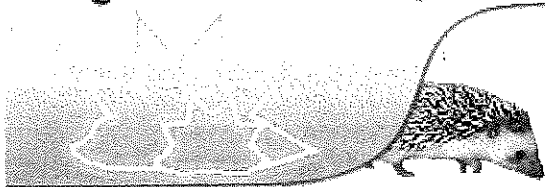
Relative Care Ease: Relatively Easy

Mongolian Gerbils are easy to care for. They urinate very little because they drink so little. They don't have much of a smell, and what smell they do have is reminiscent of cedar. They eat regular commercial hamster, rat or mouse food.

Respiratory problems and allergic reactions in Mongolian Gerbils (and other rodents) have been associated with the use of pine and/or cedar bedding material. The oils in these softwoods are what make them so desirable for their pleasant smell, but it is also what causes irritation in the gerbils. The most common symptom is a sore, bloody looking

PogStar Hedgehogs

Breeding For Excellence - Our Family To You



So You Think You Want A Hedgehog...

Disclaimer: Hedgehogs DO make wonderful pets. If they didn't I would never have fallen in love with them and ended up with so many! However, like any pet, they have their advantages and disadvantages. I wrote this article trying to make sure that any potential hedgehog owner has a chance to look at the downside of hedgehogs before they buy one, both for their sake and for that of the hedgehog.

Disadvantage #1: Hedgehogs are Living Beings

Okay, so this seems terribly obvious, but people who have not had pets before don't always think about what it really means. This is a living creature that you are becoming responsible for. You are going to have to care for it and provide for it's needs, even if you're sick, or tired, or have work to do, or would rather be doing something else. If you're buying this as a present for a child, the responsibility for it's care still falls back onto you. As the adult, you are going to have to be willing to check and make sure it's being properly cared for. If it isn't you are going to need to either be willing to remind your child to care for it, or take over its care yourself.

Is there an advantage?:

Of course there is! Animals are wonderful friends. They have been proven to decrease blood pressure and stress, and they can be wonderfully relaxing to play with and snuggle. If you get a pet as a project with your child it can be a fun activity for you to do together, as well as helping to teach your child responsibility and compassion.

Disadvantage #2: Hedgehogs Have Quills

I know, this also seems horribly obvious, but you might be amazed at how many people don't think much about what this means either. While a hedgehog that is calm and in a good mood will lay back it's quills making it very smooth, and even a hedgehog who is being watchful is no worse than petting a hairbrush, picking up a hedgehog that is on the defensive is an interesting challenge at best, and possibly quite painful. A good pet hedgehog should spend very little time balled up like this, but if you have to give it medicine, clip its nails, or get it out from somewhere it has crawled under, you will have to deal with this. (we keep a pair of heavy gloves on hand for these occasions) Hedgehogs also DO shed. A healthy hedgehog will

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