

THE LUX LAPIN

A Newsletter for Bun-Worshippers



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HOPPY 20TH ANNIVERSARY TO THE HOUSE RABBIT SOCIETY!

Twenty years of rabbit revolution — “It all started with a single phone call,” says founder, Marinell Harriman. “In 1986, a local animal advocate called to inform me that four rabbits were going to be euthanized at the SPCA the following day. I immediately called Bob at work. He said, ‘We can’t let that happen, can we?’” The Harrimans realized that rabbits were being euthanized around the country, but that rescuers could take those rabbits from shelters and adopt them out on their own. Their first four foster rabbits led to four more, until the Harrimans were rescuing at least ten rabbits per month.

After incorporating as a nonprofit in 1988, the Harrimans began publishing the House Rabbit Journal, which led to volunteers emerging first locally, in the San Francisco Bay area, and then from other areas of the country. These volunteers

established the first chapters of House Rabbit Society.

Since its founding, HRS has expanded to form a network of thousands of members and hundreds of licensed volunteers across the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia. Today, HRS volunteers collectively produce the House Rabbit Journal, and the encyclopedic, award winning www.rabbit.org Web site. Our volunteers have, since 1988, saved the lives of over 20,000 rabbits. In addition, the organization is responsible for educating tens of thousands of people, including present and prospective rabbit caretakers, veterinary and shelter staff workers, members of other rescue organizations, and members of the general public.

In 2000, HRS opened the first public rabbit-only shelter in the country, in Richmond, California, which serves as

a model for animal shelters around the world. HRS volunteers are internationally recognized for their expertise in rabbit behavior and care, and are called upon regularly to give educational seminars at venues around the world.

To celebrate its 20th anniversary, House Rabbit Society chapters will be holding special events around the country throughout the year, and we will be selling commemorative items as well. To find out about national’s 20th anniversary celebration, go to our Web site: www.rabbit.org

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**THE BEST OF BUNNY
MASSAGE:
GET TO KNOW YOUR
BUNNY THROUGH TOUCH**

The human/bunny bond can be very challenging and rewarding, as it requires a significant degree of trust, resolve and patience. A pet rabbit, unlike most pets, has a unique way of truly loving and appreciating affection and attention, but only after it has been earned. And when that privilege of giving affection is earned, bunny will never want the loving to stop.



When learning how to pet your bun (and it does take some education), start in a place where bun is comfortable — near her food area or in another quiet place in your home. This

should be a place of bunny's choosing, not yours. It's best to start with lying on the floor on your side with your head down. Bun will probably run around you — to make sure there are no wolves hiding behind you, of course — and then settle in front of you near your hand. Be aware that bunnies can have very different dispositions, and some may be more open to massage than others. In any situation, here are some areas of the bunny physique to begin your training as a bun-masseuse.



FOREHEAD

The best place to start is the forehead. If bun is shy, or comes from a troubled past, it's best to be on the floor and to simply cover her forehead with your hand. This gives bun the feeling of hiding and being sheltered.

PURRING

If bun is receptive, she will put her head down and close her eyes, and may start making mouth sounds. Tooth purring is a signal of enjoyment — a slight grinding motion of the teeth and clapping of the tongue.

SINUSES

The bridge of the nose and the top eye socket bones are perfect points to apply gentle pressure. Using your thumb and index finger, start from the bridge of the nose and slowly and gently move up to above the eyes, then to the base of the ears.

CHEEKS

Bun doesn't just sit at home all day doing nothing, she painstakingly consumes large amounts of hay, gnashes on wooden toys to keep her incisors trim, must crush every morsel of pellet and hoovers-down a giant mound of salad. She would appreciate a little attention to her ever-working jaw. Apply gentle pressure and work circles into her jaw muscles. Include circular massage on her whiskers as well.



EARS

Most bunnies do not like their ears rubbed, as they can be very ticklish. Some do, but most express this by suddenly licking their paws or the ground, etc. Don't be surprised if bun gets up, mid-massage, and has to scratch her ears. Usually, she will be ready for more loving right after her ears are comfortable again, so stay where you are, and she will settle back down.

NECK

The neck can also be a source of ticklishness for buns. It's best to simply apply gentle pressure with the flat of your hand.

STABILIZATION

Before proceeding to the shoulders, it can be very relaxing for bun to have your hand, arm or leg leaning up against her, so as to keep her from rocking side-to-side when being massaged. When bun is willing to let you do this, it's a good sign of trust, as she is somewhat boxed in with this position, decreasing her ability to take flight if she is startled.



SHOULDERS

Using your thumb on one side and fingers on the other side of her shoulders, gently and slowly squeeze across them. This will warm her up to circular massaging without tickling her at first. Gradually use circular massaging into her shoulder muscles. Eventually, it's best to stabilize her with your other hand or arm when doing this.

KISSING

Kissing bun's forehead is really one of the most beautiful things in life. Bun knows that she is truly loved when you can smother her with bunny forehead kisses. If you can take a cue from bunny social behavior with other bunnies, this type of closeness is what she is craving. If you have ever seen one bun kissing another, and the look on the



kissee's face, it is magical. Human kisses can be just as wonderful for bun. And more is better.

Massaging methodically, slowly and repetitively is the key to attaining a bun's trust. Explore the many possible variations on the above guidelines and see which methods your bun likes the best. Some massage techniques can have a heavier touch, and others can be done in a quicker fashion. Usually, it is the less ticklish areas that can be made quicker.

Most importantly, once you have learned how to be a great bun-masseuse, you will be better focused on your bunny's health. Massage is an invaluable way to get in tune with how your bunny is feeling — if she is not feeling well and is feeling tense, or if she seems very healthy and responds with luxurious relaxation.

MAKING BUN-DERFUL SALADS WITH BUN-USUAL FOODS

Is BunnyButt getting fed up with the same old greens? Feeding her the same mix of veggies and fruits everyday can wear on your bunny's well-being. Giving her variety not only ensures that she is getting the proper mix of nutrients, but also provides mental stimulation. Bring this list to the grocery store next time you get bunny-food and make bun's salad extra-delicious.

- Alfalfa sprouts
- Arugula
- Asparagus
- Bok Choy
- Catnip/catmint
- Chamomile
- Chicory
- Cilantro/coriander
- Clover
- Collards
- Cucumber peels
- Eggplant
- Fennel



- Kolrabi
- Lemon grass
- Mango
- Melon
- Okra
- Papaya
- Radicchio
- Rosemary
- Sage/salvia
- Squash fruit/flowers
- Watercress
- Wheat Grass

In the next issue of THE LUX LAPIN, we will explore the best ways to get bun's attention through verbal and physical calls, including the Clicker method. Bun can be trained!

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*With exception to cover story.

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