

Top 9 Reasons to Keep Your Bunny Indoors

- 1** Outdoor rabbits are exposed to extremes of weather: heat, cold, thunder, lightning, and high winds (which can damage or destroy housing). Of these, heat is particularly dangerous: rabbits succumb very quickly to high temperatures and need to be kept cool in the summer. In extremely cold weather, drinking water freezes and rabbits can become dehydrated.
- 2** Outdoor rabbits are prone to insect/tick bites and fly strike (flies lay eggs on the rabbit and the larvae burrow into the rabbits flesh). Flystrike can kill a rabbit very quickly.
- 3** Outdoor rabbits are exposed to parasites and diseases carried by other animals: e.g., raccoons carry *Baylisascaris procyonis*, which rabbits can pick up on the ground and ingest (by grooming their feet), and which can then migrate to the rabbit's brain, where it is fatal.
- 4** Outdoor rabbits often become victims of poisonous pesticides, herbicides, and/or fertilizers. Even if your neighbor uses them and you don't, rain will wash the chemicals on to your property. In many areas, ground and air spraying of toxic chemicals is used because of the threat of West Nile Virus.
- 5** Outdoor rabbits are often neglected or forgotten once the novelty wears off. Their food or water may become infested with insects, bacteria or molds. They do not get the human interaction they need in order to develop trust and often become extremely hard to handle as a result.
- 6** Outdoor rabbits are "out of sight," if not "out of mind," and this makes it almost impossible for the bunny parent to become adequately familiar with their bunny's normal behaviors. When you are not thoroughly familiar with your bunny's normal behaviors, it is difficult to recognize subtle signs of illness/injury in time to prevent emergency visits.
- 7** Outdoor rabbits experience fear from unfamiliar sounds from which they cannot escape (e.g. lawnmowers, leaf blowers, tree chopping), smells, unfamiliar visitors (e.g. neighborhood children, passersby, etc.).
- 8** Outdoor rabbits often become victims of predators (dogs, cats, hawks, raccoons, snakes), and can suffer fatal heart attacks from even the APPROACH of a predator.
- 9** Outdoor rabbits (especially those housed in hutches) often get little or no exercise. Rabbits that are let loose in a yard for exercise face all of the above dangers, as well as road hazards and the risk of getting lost if they escape from the yard.

Outdoor "hutch" rabbits who manage to avoid death by predator, disease or heat stroke often have a significantly lower quality of life. A life spent confined to a hutch is boring, depressing, and stressful for a creature as sensitive and social as a rabbit, while a life spent unconfined, but outdoors, is simply too dangerous for these domestic creatures.

If your rabbit currently lives outdoors, please consider creating an indoor space for her at least during the night, when many predators are most active. Even if she's confined to a smaller cage at night, or to a bathroom or utility room, she's safe, and she's making a first step to being part of your family. There's no mystery to turning an "outdoor rabbit" into a house rabbit. It can begin in a single evening, and you will quickly discover the joy and delight that a safe and happy house rabbit can bring to your life.

