

Next Week: Hummingbirds

# Fuzzy Bunnies



photo by Amanda Nichols

## Mini Fact:

A rabbit's ears can be rotated 270 degrees around — almost a full circle, which is 360 degrees.

Whether small or large, hopping through a field or snacking on some lettuce leaves growing in your garden, rabbits seem to appear often in the springtime.

With about 50 species of rabbits found around the world, there's a lot to learn about these little mammals.

The Mini Page hops into the world of rabbits this week.

## Pygmy rabbits

Rabbits vary greatly in size. The smallest rabbit in the world is a **pygmy** rabbit. Adult pygmies range from 9.3 to 11.6 inches in length and weigh less than a pound.

The Columbia Basin pygmy rabbits are found in Montana, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Oregon, Nevada, California, Washington and Idaho. They like to eat sagebrush, which they depend on as a main source of nourishment. However, due to loss of habitat, these little bunnies have both state and federal endangered status. While programs have been put into place to reestablish the pygmy population, pygmies



photo by USFWS - Pacific Region

have at least 20 natural predators, and recent threats to the pygmy rabbit populations are drought, brush fires and disease.

## Flemish giant rabbits

The largest bunnies in the world are Flemish giant rabbits. These fuzzy hoppers can grow to be 2.5 feet in length and can weigh up to 22 pounds.

Flemish giants were brought to the U.S. in the 1890s from England and Belgium. They were raised for meat and fur originally. Over time, they have become companion animals to many people and are described as "gentle giants" because they are so large and calm. According to the Maryland Zoo, they can even be trained to use a litter box!

The fur of this rabbit is shiny and thick and can be any of seven colors, which include steel gray, blue, black, fawn, light gray, white and sandy. They have a semi-arched back, and their hind legs are strong and broad.



photo by TJflex2

Flemish giant rabbits eat a lot of grass and hay, but as companion animals, they also consume protein pellets.

## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of rabbits are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

COLORS, EARS, ENDANGERED, FLEMISH, FLOPPY, FRUIT, GENTLE, GIANT, GRASS, HABITAT, HAY, HOP, MAMMALS, PELLETS, PREDATOR, PYGMY, RABBITS, SAGEBRUSH.

O G R H S L A M M A M I K P X  
F T C O D E R E G N A D N E Q  
R P C F T E F G F L E M I S H  
U E O I T A T I B A H T P N S  
I L P R E D A T O R H A Y S R  
T L G I A N T E E A R S G S O  
O E P O H H M H R O B M M A L  
Y T Y E L T N E G P X P Y R O  
E S W H H S U R B E G A S G C  
M S T I B B A R Y P P O L F Q



## Cook's Corner

### Mandarin Orange Salad

#### You'll need:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- pinch of pepper to taste
- 1 (11-ounce) can mandarin oranges, drained

- 1 (6- to 9-ounce) bag mixed greens
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds



#### What to do:

1. Combine olive oil, vinegar, sugar and pepper in a jar; shake well.
2. In a bowl, add oranges to dressing mixture and chill for 30 minutes.
3. Place lettuce greens in a bowl; mix in red bell pepper.
4. Gently mix in dressing.
5. Top with slivered almonds. Serves 4 to 6.

\* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

## 7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. car motor (6) \_\_\_\_\_
2. place to keep your socks (6) \_\_\_\_\_
3. touch (4) \_\_\_\_\_
4. small red fruit (6) \_\_\_\_\_
5. brown spots on the skin (8) \_\_\_\_\_
6. school after high school (7) \_\_\_\_\_
7. large sea creature (5) \_\_\_\_\_










EGE	ENG	FE	ER
WH	DRAW	CK	COLL
EL	FRE	LES	INE
RY	ALE	CH	ER

Answers: engine, drawer, feel, cherry, freckles, college, whale.



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## Rabbit facts

-  Rabbits are found on each continent except Antarctica.
-  A baby rabbit is called a **kit**. A female rabbit is called a **doe**, and a male rabbit is called a **buck**.
-  **Domesticated**, or pet, rabbits live around eight years. Wild rabbits live closer to two years since they face predators and habitat changes.
-  When they're happy, rabbits will sometimes jump and twitch their feet and heads.
-  A bunny's large ears make it an excellent listener, but they also help it control its body temperature.
-  Rabbits can make quite a bit of sound. They screech, chatter their teeth, growl and even make honking noises.
-  They can hop 10 feet in length and 3 feet high.
-  Rabbits are social and like to be around each other.
-  Bunnies really like fruit.

## Resources



### On the Web:

- [bit.ly/MPRabbits](https://bit.ly/MPRabbits)

### At the library:

- "Rascally Rabbits!" by Aline Newman
- "Bunnies: A Wild Wonders Book" by Mary Sivertsen and Sarah Jacobsen

## Mini Jokes



**Renee:** How do rabbits like to travel?  
**Rick:** By hareplane!

## Eco Note



Bees, butterflies and other pollinators exposed to common air pollution are significantly impaired in their ability to sniff out the plants that depend upon them, according to new field research. British scientists say the pollution, combined with land use changes, are also responsible for an up to 70% drop in the number of pollinating insects. Scientists believe the pollution changes the scents of flowers, making them harder to find.

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## For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles about rabbits and chat about them with your family.

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