

# Summer Survival

## A Guide for Australian Rabbit Owners

Heat is the number one killer of pet rabbits! Not everyone can bring their rabbits in for the day, although if you can arrange a small inside hutch that can stay in the coolest room that is best. Here is a collection of tried and tested tricks to give your rabbits the best chance of surviving a hot summer.

### **Rabbits and temperature**

Rabbits do not tolerate high temperatures or humidity well, they do not sweat! Put a thermometer in your rabbit's hutch to accurately see what temperature your rabbits are living in. Anything over 20 degrees and your rabbit must have access to shade. Anything over 30 and you must take steps to help your rabbit!

In the wild rabbits go deep in their burrows to stay cool, a pet rabbit does not have that option.



### **Helping a rabbit with heat stress**

An overheating rabbit must be brought inside immediately! Wrap the rabbit in wet towel to cool down. Don't make the towel too cold or your rabbit may go into shock. Seek veterinary advice!

### **Hutch location**

Will your hutch be in the shade all day? If not then move the hutch or rig up some shade cloth. You can further improve the temperature in the hutch by covering it with wet towels, these should be kept wet throughout the day. If your hutch has a lifting lid over the sleeping area you can wedge it open a few centimetres, small enough so your rabbit won't escape but enough to let hot air escape.

### **Water**

Plastic water drips are a popular choice as they keep the water clean however these can heat up very quickly on a warm day. The best option is a ceramic bowl, it will need more regular cleaning but it will stay cooler for longer. You can also add in some ice cubes to further lower the temperature, your rabbits might come and rest against it.

Check the water level regularly, a rabbit suffering in the heat may not be drinking!



### **Bunny Shower**

Some rabbits won't mind getting a short spray from a spray bottle, if your rabbit doesn't like this then use a cloth to dampen his ears.

### **Ice packs**

Keep a supply of frozen ceramic tiles, ice packs or water bottles in your freezer and place one in your rabbit's hutch, they may take awhile to work out what it is but once they do they will lie on or against it. Replace the bottle throughout the day as needed. Only use non flimsy icepacks that you can fill with plain or salted water, check everything for signs of chewing and replace as needed.



Every small thing you can do will add up!

### **List Contributors**

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