



pets in the classroom



CARE SHEET

GERBIL

Housing

A gerbil's habitat should be glass or metal that is escape-proof and has a solid bottom. Gerbils love to burrow and play in tubes and boxes, so the largest habitat possible is recommended in order to provide plenty of room for activity. Minimum cage size is 12x12x12" with wire spacing no more than 1/2" apart. Multilevel homes are preferred since they provide additional space for exercising. 1–2 inches of bedding should be placed in the habitat. Gerbils are gentle, social and enjoy the companionship of another gerbil. If raised together, they may be kept in same-sex pairs. If not, keep adult gerbils housed separately.

Environment

A gerbil's environment should be placed in an area that maintains average household temperatures and that is away from direct sunlight or drafts. Proper bedding includes hardwood shavings or pelleted or recycled product. Cedar-based products are not recommended. Care of the habitat includes removing wet spots daily, changing bedding at least once a week, and cleaning its contents at least once a week with mild soap and water. After cleaning, rinse and allow to dry completely before placing the gerbil back into the habitat.

Care

A gerbil's diet should include high-quality gerbil food and small amounts of fruits and vegetables, but be careful as too much fruits and vegetables may cause diarrhea. Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake. Provide your gerbil with chew sticks as it chews to maintain its incisor teeth, which grow continuously. Gerbils stay clean and do not need baths, but if necessary, clean it with a damp washcloth or unscented baby wipes. You may brush its fur with a soft-backed brush. Consult with a veterinarian if a gerbil's teeth or nails seem too long.