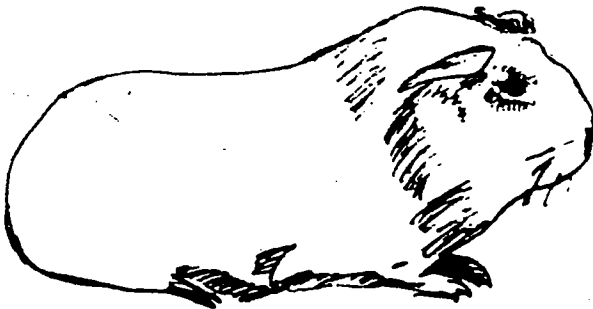


SATIN



ABYSSINIAN

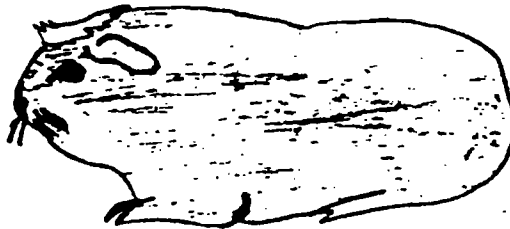
# CAVY MANUAL



AMERICAN



TEDDY



CRESTED



PERUVIAN



SILKY

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## HISTORY OF THE CAVY

The cavy is a member of the rodent family and unrelated to rabbits in any way. The term "guinea pig" has an unknown origin, since it did not come from Guinea in Africa but from Peru, South America. The Spanish conquerors of Peru brought these rodents to Europe around the turn of the 16th century and they were brought to England in the 18th century. In Peru today, the cavy is kept in very much the same way we keep chickens. They are fed grain, hay and table scraps and are commonly known as "Cuis" (KWEES). The Peruvian government has very large operations where cavies are raised under strict supervision for food purposes.

When cavies were first shown under the American Rabbit Breeders Association, there were only three recognized breeds. Today there are seven with three more waiting to be shown and recognized in the 1985 National Convention of A.R.B.A. Hold on however, there are more breeders working on even more breeds such as the Coronet, the Ridgeback and the Satin Teddy.

There is a lot of history behind these interesting little creatures, but a whole lot more to be made as this booklet is introduced to 4 H ers who have had no contact with these little, loveable animals.

## FACTS ABOUT CAVIES

Cavies, like humans, cannot store vitamin C and have to intake this vitamin everyday to prevent scurvy

Cavies need toenails clipped and need an occasional bath to keep them in top condition.

If a cavy breaks a tooth, it will replace itself within one week; however, to prevent them from going down in condition, soft foods such as bread and their pellets soaked in milk will help them along.

Cavies come in season every 13 to 15 days normally.

A cavy's gestation period is 68 to 70 days

Cavies, if well cared for, will live approximately 7 years.

A cavy's eyesight is very poor, this is why they startle so easily but its hearing and sense of smell are excellent.

Cavies cannot transmit any disease to man.

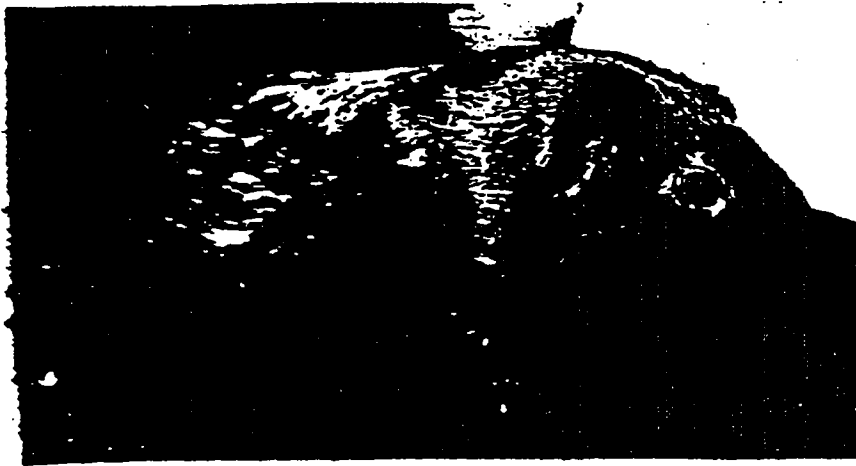
Cavies are nocturnal animals, but easily adapt to human hours for care and feeding. They should never be kept directly on wire because of the structure of their feet. Toenails tend to get caught and the cavy, in its panic to get unstuck, will very often twist and break their leg.

## BREEDS OF CAVIES



### ABYSSINIAN

The Abyssinian was developed in England through crosses of the smooth coated cavy and the Peruvian cavy. The coat is short, harsh and wiry with an erect mane running down the back. On both sides of the body are rosettes with clearly defined centers and are distributed regularly all over the body.



### AMERICAN

The American, or smooth coated variety, is the original domesticated variety, and was originally known as "English" in this country. Surprisingly enough, in England they are known as "smooths". Their country of origin was South America, and it is said sailors brought them to Europe. The American has a short, silky coat of hair lying smoothly and evenly over the entire body.

## BREEDS OF CAVIES(cont.)



### CRESTED

The biggest characteristic is the white rosette or star, the gene that causes this has been labeled the "star gene" or "star ring". The placement of this gene is strictly luck in where it shows up. It has taken years of careful breeding to get the star to appear where it should, which is on the forehead, between the ears. It has been proven that the very best results for breeding a show quality crested is to breed a mis-marked animal to a solid.



### PERUVIAN

The origin of the Peruvian is rather cloudy, but record has it that between 1866 and 1880 it was introduced into England and the secretary of the London Zoo named it Peruvian simply because it sounded good. The coat should be very dense, silky and as long as possible. It is divided into three parts for the purpose of description; rear sweep, side sweep and head furnishings which fall over the shoulders into a thick mane.

## BREEDS OF CAVIES(cont.)



### SATIN

The distinctive feature of this breed is its hair. The "Satin" hair is different from the regular hair of the other cavy breeds in that its hair shaft is hollow allowing light to flow through it and this gives off the "satin" sheen appearance.



### SILKIE

The Silkie has been around for a long time and used to show on the table as "Angoras". They became an accepted breed of cavy in 1979. The coat should be dense and silky, very long and even. The coat on this cavy is also divided into three parts, the mane, the rear sweep and the side sweep. The mane should grow straight back between the ears flowing naturally with no part and flow into the rear sweep.

## BREEDS OF CAVIES(cont.)



### TEDDY

The Teddy appeared in the middle 1960's in a large herd of pet stock. The original boar and sow were mongrels, that is cavies that are not purebred. A part Abyssinian boar and a mostly Silky or Peruvian sow. They were all mostly tortiseshell and white in color. Soon after that they were bred intensely for their odd Teddy coat. They were accepted as a breed in 1977. The coat is to be thick, close and short, as uniform in length as possible. Hair shafts are to be "kinky". No gap or flatness should be in a good Teddy coat.

### DEVELOPMENT OF NEW BREEDS

Efforts are being made all the time to improve the accepted breeds and to introduce new breeds to the standards. Presently there are breeders working on several new breeds to be introduced at the 1985 American Rabbit Breeders Convention to be held in Houston, Texas in October. At the printing of this book, these are some of the breeds being worked on; the Satin Abyssinian, the Satin Silkie, The Satin Teddy, the Coronet, Satin Peruvian and the Ridgeback.

To be accepted as a new breed, the animal (in sufficient numbers) has to be shown at three consecutive National Conventions of the American Rabbit Breeders Association, these are held yearly in a different state each time. The state of Florida was the host for the 1984 Convention.

## CARING FOR THE CAVY

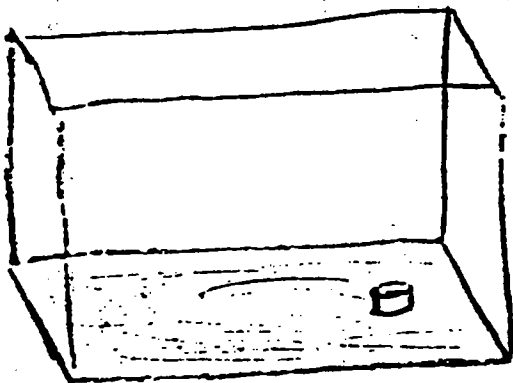
### HOUSING

It is very simple to provide a place for your cavy to live. You can have something as elaborate as a cage with a solid bottom with feeders and water bottle or something as simple as a box or aquarium with water bowl and feed bowl. A cavy should never be kept on wire bottom cages as their feet are likely to get caught and their leg broken in the effort to get out.

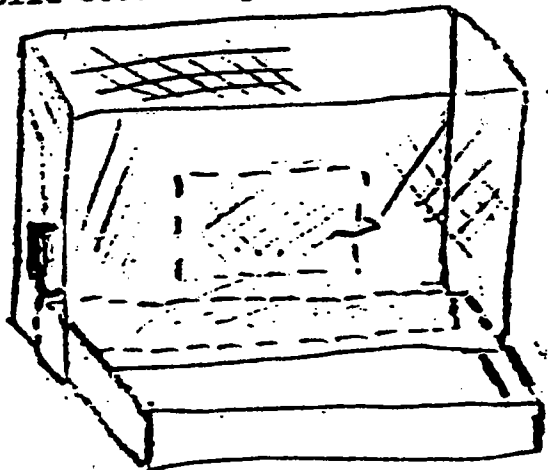
All different kinds of bedding can be used for your cavy. A common bedding is wood shavings. Another alternative is ground corncobs, which are available at your feed store. Cavies have no smell at all, their urine, however, is another story. Cavy cages need to be cleaned at least once a week. If you use thick bedding, you may find that you can clean every other week, your nose will tell you when you have waited too long. Set a schedule for yourself and you will find that a routine is easy to stick to. Once a month you should do a complete cleaning on your cavy home and equipment. Remove your cavy and discard all bedding. Wash your cage and equipment in a mild soap, rinse well. It is a good idea to rinse your things in water with a touch of bleach in it (bleach is an excellent disinfectant) and then rinse with clear water and allow to dry, then rebed the cage, replace your equipment and your cavy. Be sure to keep your surplus bedding in a dry place; damp bedding gets moldy.

The very best thing you can do for your cavies and yourself (once they are cleaned and fed) is to get a chair (Or sit on the floor, depending on the height of your cavies home) sit back and watch them. You learn a lot about their individual personalities this way and, when you know your cavies, it is easy to spot any abnormal behavior. You will know, for example, when a certain animal goes off his feed; you see when a sow has had enough of her brood and is tired; or when a certain little boar starts to "feel his oats" and needs to be removed from the females. The key word to raising cavies, is involvement. The more you learn about these little animals, the more interesting they become. Above all, learn to relax and enjoy the best fancy in the world, Cavies.

AQUARIUM

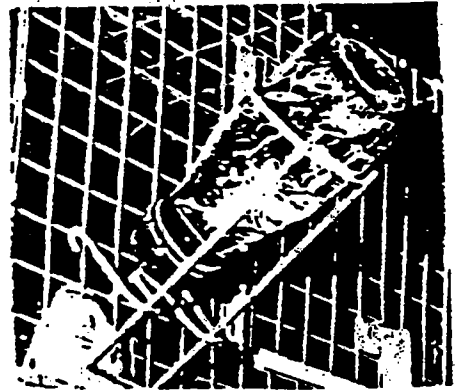


WIRE CAGE (with pull out, solid bottomed pan)

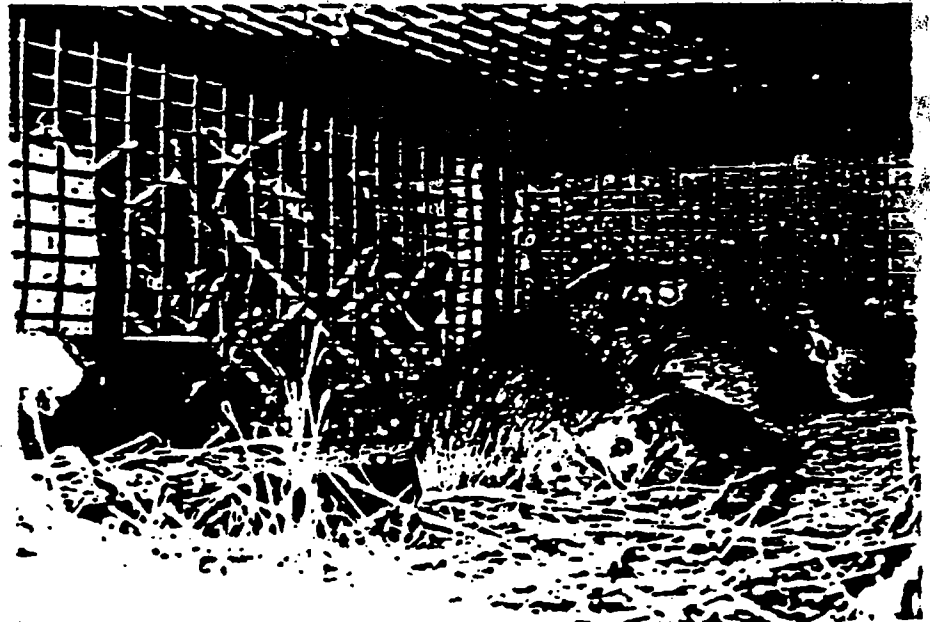




This a very nice professional set up. Notice how the cages are all neatly stacked with plenty of head room in the building for air circulation. A cavy needs little room and must be free from drafts. Here at Valley Acre, the fan for the building is mounted in the door for good ventilation & at the same time not giving animals a direct draft. Water bottles are mounted to the left of each door for ease of filling and preventing the bottle from being in the way when you are removing animals or cleaning the cages.



This is how your cage should be set up for a group of cavy.



## HANDLING YOUR CAVY

Slide your hand under the cavy & gently take your finger and "roll back" the fur (that is, pulling the fur back the wrong way in order to see the skin surface) to check for fur mites.



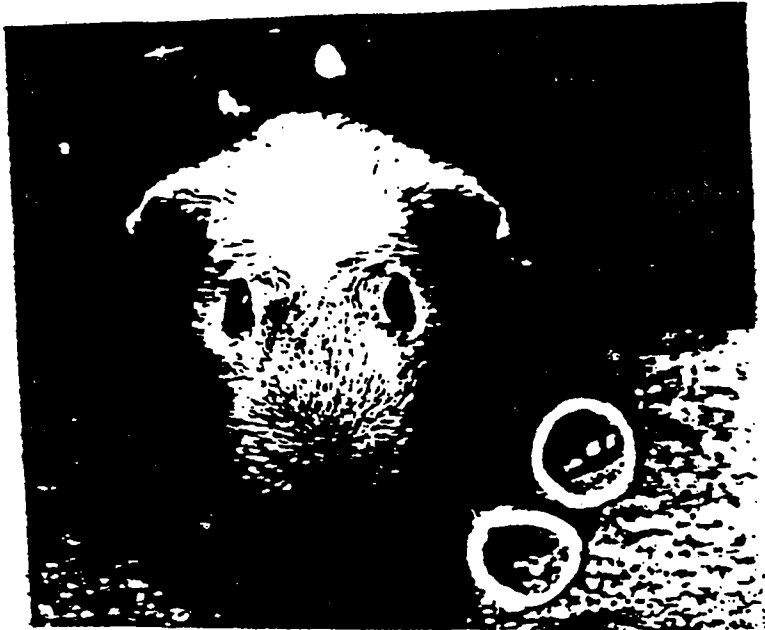
Support the animal with one hand and gently flip him on his back into your other hand.



To check the sex of the cavy, while on his back (shown) take your thumb and gently press right above the lower portion of the animal (as shown)



## PROPER NAIL CLIPPING



This Cavy has gone too long between nail clippings. This condition is easily remedied with a pair of nail clippers.



Hold the cavy firmly against yourself and gently place the nail clipper around the nail. Firmly nip the end of the nail off, being careful not to cut too close to the blood vessel in the nail.

