

# Flying Squirrel Care Sheet

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## **Physical Characteristics:**

Adult flying squirrels weigh approximately 4 to 5 ounces and are approximately 1 foot in length. The Southern flying squirrel has large dark eyes and a bushy tail which it curls behind its back. Although nocturnal in nature, flying squirrels will interact during daylight hours. They can live up to 15 years in captivity.

## **Feeding:**

A good flying squirrel diet consists of a combination of fresh nuts and fruits. Nuts may include peanuts, pecans or walnuts. At least 40% of their diet should be fresh fruit to keep their digestive system working smoothly. Fresh fruits may include apples, grapes, oranges, peaches, pears or plums. Other foods that may be included in their diet are carrots, mealworms and sunflower seeds. A commercial flying squirrel food should also be used. Try to offer a variety of these items since all squirrels don't have the same preferences. Provide water in an open container, not a water bottle. A spool of rabbit salt should be kept available at all times.

## **Housing:**

Flying squirrels should be housed in a wire cage and not an aquarium. A wire cage allows them to climb and provides better air circulation. A flying squirrel needs a small cage during its first few months to restrict their activity level. When the flying squirrel reaches 5 to 6 months of age, a larger cage is appropriate. A nest box should be mounted near the top of the cage to create a suitable environment for an adult squirrel. Wood shavings provide a suitable bedding material and all types of wood are acceptable. The squirrel will choose one corner of the cage for its bathroom and that area should be cleaned every few days. The squirrels can exercise inside the cage and branches and bird perches can be spread around so they can jump from perch to perch.

## **Bonding:**

A bonding pouch is a great idea during the bonding process. It should be made of a material that is easy to breathe through. This pouch should be placed near your body preferably over the heart. By carrying a squirrel around on your body so that they feel the heartbeat, body warmth and body odor, the bond takes place. The bonding process should be swapped around so the squirrels will be interactive with everyone and not just one individual.

## **Calcium Deficiency:**

Flying squirrels are prone to developing a calcium deficiency. This is due to the fact that they are nocturnal and don't get sufficient sunlight. You should use a calcium supplement and add liquid vitamins to their water.

## **Diseases:**

The flying squirrel's body secretes oil that totally repels any lice, fleas, mites, ticks, etc. There has never been a known case of rabies in flying squirrels.