EXERCISE RUNS: DESIGN
Hutches and runs can be portable (moved around the lawn together as required) or permanent, with a hutch within the enclosure. Permanent enclosures are best sited on an easily-cleaned base such as paving slabs - grass will quickly turn to mud! Remember to include a digging and grazing tray as mentioned elsewhere in this leaflet. Portable runs sitting on grass must have wire mesh skirts to prevent the bunnies from digging out. If the hutch isn’t permanently attached to the exercise area, provide several wooden boxes or bolt holes for the rabbits to hide and shelter in.

SAFETY FIRST
Each year, many pet rabbits are snatched from gardens by predators - particularly urban foxes. You must protect your rabbits from attack by dogs, cats, foxes, ferrets, polecats, weasels, stoats, mink and birds of prey.

Chicken wire provides little protection - use strong weld mesh, with sturdy door fasteners, and check the doors regularly. Exercise runs need secure lids, to keep the rabbits in and predators out! hinges and catches are just as important on runs as they are on hitches. If your rabbits are allowed to roam free in the garden, make sure that the garden is escape-proof; that there’s a ‘bolt hole’ where the rabbits can feel safe if anything should frighten them and remember to remove or prevent access to poisonous plants.

KEEPING OUTDOOR RABBITS HEALTHY
Outdoor rabbits need regular health checks. The RWAF Hop To It booklet repeats how to do this at home. Outdoor rabbits are at particular risk from the deadly diseases RVHD & myxomatosis - keep vaccinations up to date!

FLYSTRIKE
Did you know that flies will lay eggs on rabbits leading to a maggot infestation, which can cause serious damage and even death? Rabbits suffering from obesity, dental disease, diarrhoea, arthritis and skin wounds are at highest risk. Flies are also attracted to rabbits living in poor environmental conditions e.g. dirty hutches - always keep your rabbit's living area clean. Even rabbits kept in clean conditions may develop soiled hides and attract flies. Once flies lay their eggs, they quickly develop into maggots which will attack your rabbit and this can often be fatal. You must thoroughly check your rabbits every day in particular in the summer months. Check out our Hop To It booklet or website for more information.

Apply for membership
Complete the form below and return to: Rabbit Welfare Fund, Enigma House, Culmhead, Taunton, TA3 7DY. Alternatively, for instant membership by debit or credit card or via PayPal, you can join online at http://shop.rabbitwelfare.co.uk/ or you can telephone the RWA's National Helpline on 0844 324 6090. Calls charged at local rate from landlines. Mobile providers will charge more.

Please use BLOCK CAPITALS
Name: ________________________________
House No: ______ Address: ________________________________
Postcode: __________ Telephone No: ________________________________
E-mail: ________________________________

I would like to apply for membership of the Rabbit Welfare Association. I agree to be bound by the rules and constitution of the organisation. I understand that my membership details will be held on computer.

Signed: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________

Annual Subscription: Join today and receive a car sticker absolutely free!

- Adult/Junior £20
- Family Membership (2 + people) £24
- European Membership £30
- Overseas Member £32
- Veterinary Practices (this includes 75 Hop To It booklets) £45
- Rescue membership (this includes 75 Hop To It booklets) £40

Or join on line via our shop: http://shop.rabbitwelfare.co.uk/ or you can telephone the RWA’s National Helpline on 0844 324 6090.

Please note:
Cheques should be made payable to the ‘Rabbit Welfare Association’
Payment by credit/debit card. Please complete the form below.
Card Number: ________________________________
Valid from: __________ Expiry Date: __________ Issue No (Switch): __________ Cardholder name: ________________________________
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The RWAF is a combination of the Rabbit Welfare Association and its charitable arm, the Rabbit Welfare Fund (registered charity number 1085689). Membership is to the RWA. This leaflet is sponsored by Pippin, a very lucky house rabbit who knows that A Hutch is Not Enough.

Join us!
As a member you will receive:
- Four issues of Rabbits On a year
- The RWA Members Handbook*
- Hop To It, our comprehensive rabbit care guide
- Stickers for your car and pet carrier*
- Reduced rates at our annual conference.
- An invaluable Vet Expert Advice

*These items are in the joining pack only

The RWF Guide to keeping your rabbit outdoors
RABBITS NEED....

SHELTER AND EXERCISE
You should never keep your rabbits in a hutch permanently. They need daily exercise and to be able to choose when they rest or play. Rabbits are ‘crepuscular’ so most active at dusk and dawn, traditionally times when we would have locked them up for the night, so it is important that their whole area is safe and that they can follow their own body clock. So they should have a permanent living area of 10ft x 6ft x 2ft high as a minimum, where they can rest, forage, dig, rear up tall, run and hide. If you can’t do this for them you will need to provide as big a safe exercise area as possible which is always attached to their hutch or shed. Make sure they’re secure from predators though. Aim for a minimum of 8ft x 6ft x 2ft high. Although this might sound big, it’s really only 4 hogs for most rabbits! Remember to provide a hiding place for each rabbit in the exercise area too. You could join two smaller exercise runs together to create this space, and join the hutch/shed to the run using a ‘Runaround’ system (see photo).

TOYS
Rabbits need things to keep them occupied, such as plastic tunnels; large plant pots; hay-filled litter trays and planters of earth to dig in. Wild rabbits spend several hours foraging for food daily, so use your imagination when feeding your bunny. Scatter food on the floor of the hutch/run or use a treat ball, rather than feeding in a bowl, and provide constant access to hay. A huge variety of rabbit toys can be found in pet shops and online, but even shredding a simple cardboard box will give them hours of fun!

RABBIT HUTCHES: DESIGN & LOCATION
Most people still opt for the traditional wooden rabbit hutch. When choosing a hutch make sure it is a large solid construction, and is predator and weather proof. As a minimum look for something 6x2x2 ft and make sure you check that the door fastenings, hinges and wire are strong enough to keep foxes out. Instead of the traditional rabbit hutch, why not make your rabbit habitat an attractive garden feature? Be imaginative... garden sheds, summerhouses, or wooden Wendy Houses with an aviary/run built on the side (accessed via a cat flap) make ideal homes. Remember to provide plenty of additional ventilation - wooden buildings can overheat rapidly in summer.

If you opt for a hutch make sure it has a living area with a strong wire-mesh door and a partitioned sleeping area with a solid door. There are many variations of the basic hutch design. Some have ramps to allow access to a built-in run underneath. The main drawback of this design is that bedding from the living area often falls down the hole when the ramp is lowered.

Hutches must be raised on legs to give protection from damp, and to deter vermin. The roof should be covered with roofing felt, sloped to allow water to run off, and have an overhang. The only limit is your imagination! When it comes to exercise, rabbits often enjoy running loose around the garden. This is ideal for them but please remember that they will need supervision as there are risks to the rabbit, and of course to your plants!

RABBITS ARE SOCIAL ANIMALS
They love to snuggle together, groom each other and keep each other warm, so they should be kept at least in neutered, compatible pairs. A male/female pair is easiest, but don’t forget that both rabbits will need to be neutered, and introductions carefully supervised! There is lots of information in our Hop To It booklet on how to do this, or check out our website. If you want more detailed help with bonding a pair you can contact us at hq@rabbitwelfare.co.uk or phone the Helpline.

As a responsible pet owner, you’ll want your bunnies to enjoy a happy, healthy life. Just think - rabbits need shelter, exercise, companionship and toys and you won’t go far wrong! Rabbits can live indoors or out - if you’ve chosen to keep yours outdoors then we hope this leaflet will inspire you to give your rabbits the lives they deserve.