



Introduction Guide To The Care Of Prairie Dogs

Scientific Name: Cynomys

Life Span: Approx 12 years in captivity

Size: 1-2 lbs similar size to a guinea pig

Appearance: Prairie dogs are burrowing rodents native to the grasslands of North America. The five different species of prairie dogs are: black-tailed, white-tailed, Gunnison's, Utah, and Mexican prairie dogs. A prairie dog is a variety of a ground squirrel. Most prairie dogs are the black-tail variety. A prairie dog is diurnal meaning it is active during the daylight hours. Prairie dogs are very social animals. They are very loyal and expressive. Prairie dogs are extremely hardy animals

Temperament and Handling: When you first bring your prairie dog home, hold it even if it protests. You may use gloves if necessary and must not let the prairie dog loose. If the prairie dog bites, discipline it. Never let it jump out of the cage when you open the door. You must always have it jump or walk into your arms and then you may put it down. A prairie dog must be taught that you are the boss. You must not give an inch with them while they are pups. Once a prairie dog has bonded with you, it will love you like its own family. A prairie dog has a variety of vocal signals and body which you must learn to recognize and respect.

Housing: The best cage for a prairie dog is a multi-level ferret cage. The multi-level ferret cage is closest to a burrow and gives the prairie dog adequate room to move around and stand up. Prairie dogs may be moved between different cages to keep them from becoming bored. The cage tray bottom may be lined with pine shavings or aspen bedding to absorb moisture. Hay and bedding material may be added for them to weave a nest with/ replicate a burrow on the bottom layer of the cage.

Heating and Lighting: n/a



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Pets and reptiles

Feeding: Prairie dogs feed on hay, rodent block and fresh fruits and vegetables. Any hay will do just fine but do not use alfalfa hay except as a treat. Fresh corn on the cob is a favourite with prairie dogs. Collard greens, carrots, green beans, plums and potatoes are also recommended. Do not give prairie dogs any green part of a potato because it is toxic to them. Nuts, dry dog food, crackers and parrot mix may be used for treats. They also like prickly pear cactus. Try to offer a variety of items since all prairie dogs don't have the same preferences. A good treat for a prairie dog's teeth is dried corn on the cob, hard beef bones or dried pig ears. A prairie dog should not weigh over 4 pounds. Prairie dogs love to eat but if prairie dogs are overfed, they may get sick and die. Provide water in a water bottle.

Please note that this is only an introductory guide based on our opinions and experience, we advise you to continually research and learn as much as possible from as many sources as you can, every animal is different and new care and information is always being developed and found 😊