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SUPPLY LIST



HOUSING

CAGE

Specs

Cages must be a minimum of 4 cubic feet per sugar glider. Taller cages with levels are preferred. Bar spacing should be no more than 0.5" to prevent escape.

Temperature

The temperature inside the cage should always be between 72° and 80° F with the humidity between 30% and 70%.

Material

Wire-sided cages are preferable because they provide plenty of ventilation and options for climbing. All cage floors, ramps, and levels should be solid or covered with fleece since standing on wire can cause injuries and bumblefoot. It's important to make sure the bars are coated with a safe 'powder coated' high-quality finish in case the gliders chew the bars.

Examples

Critter Nation cages are easy to clean, customize, and move around. The Madagascar Sugar Glider Cage is also a good option. The more space you can provide, the better!



72° - 80°

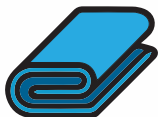
< 4 cubic feet per pet >



wire cage

BEDDING

Anti-pill fleece blankets or liners are the safest options for sugar glider bedding because they may eat other types and get intestinal blockages and their nails can easily get stuck in other types of fabric. Use the anti-pill fleece to line the cage and cover any exposed wire floors.



fleece



HOUSING

FURNISHINGS

Essentials

Set your sugar glider's cage up with the primary essentials, including a water bottle, food bowl, lots of foraging toys, a wheel large enough for your sugar glider to comfortably run in that does not have a center beam, plenty of hammocks, bonding pouches for in and out of cage use, at least one shelter/hide, and at least one bed and/or layers of anti-pill fleece. Be sure to check the fleece and bedding daily for chewing and soiling.

Variety

It is important to have a variety of toys, beds, and fun items you can rotate to keep your sugar glider interested. Good examples include hanging ropes, bird toys, fabric cubes, fleece vines, bird branches, jingle balls, Barrel of Monkeys, and PVC tubes. Visit the homemade toys tab on our website for more ideas.



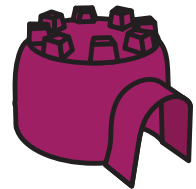
food dish



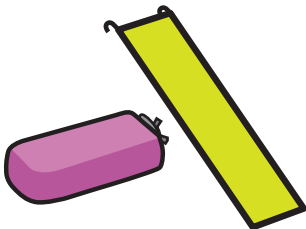
water bottle



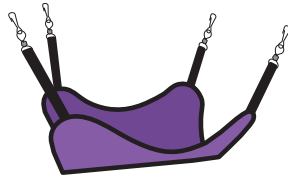
bonding pouch



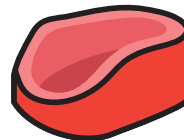
hides



levels/ramps



hammocks



beds



wheel



toys



FEEDING

DIET

"Several components make up the recommended sugar glider diet. The captive diet should include nectar, insects, other protein sources, and limited fruit and vegetables. Protein is a critical nutritional factor in sugar gliders. Various protein sources include insects, eggs, and commercial protein sources. Another natural dietary component is sap and nectar, which provides the necessary carbohydrates. Sources include fresh nectar, honey, and artificial nectar products. Commercial sugar glider and insectivore diets are available and should be included as part of the diet."

- Dr. Robert Ness, DVM

Staple Diet

Sugar gliders have very specific dietary needs that require a delicate balance of vitamins and minerals, along with a 2:1 calcium to phosphorus ratio. Because this can be difficult to understand and correctly calculate, MNPPR recommends feeding Critter Love® Complete - Sugar Glider Staple or Exotic Nutrition® HPW (High Protein Wombaroo) Original diet (often called oHPW). Pellet food should never be used because it can cause oral abscesses and is often nutritionally unbalanced.

Fruit and Vegetable Salad

Diets that contain both a fruit and vegetable salad mix and a commercial protein component are the best way to provide your pet with a well-rounded diet. Follow the directions on your chosen protein source to make sure you're providing the correct ratio of foods. The Critter Love and oHPW diets recommend combining 1 tablespoon of protein mixture with 2 tablespoons of a fruit and vegetable salad per glider. You can find suggestions on fruit and vegetable mixes (or purchase pre-made salads) at Critter Love's website here: critterlove.com/salad-mixtures. Many people prefer to create large salad batches and freeze them to make their daily feeding routine easier.

Supplements

If you feed your sugar glider one of the recommended commercial diets above, you should not need to provide additional supplements to your pet. Do not use supplements unless your pet has a health condition and they are prescribed by your glider-savvy vet.



FEEDING

Treats

Treats are not only a great training tool, but also a way to provide variety and enrichment to your pet's life and routine. Do not feed more than ½ tablespoon per day. Below is a short compilation of safe and unsafe foods for sugar gliders. For a more complete guide, view the comprehensive list created by **Critter Love**.

SAFE FOODS

<i>apples</i>	<i>grapefruit</i>
<i>asparagus</i>	<i>green beans</i>
<i>bananas</i>	<i>kale</i>
<i>bell peppers</i>	<i>kiwi</i>
<i>blackberries</i>	<i>mango</i>
<i>blueberries</i>	<i>papaya</i>
<i>broccoli</i>	<i>parsley</i>
<i>Brussels sprouts</i>	<i>pear</i>
<i>cabbage</i>	<i>peas</i>
<i>carrots</i>	<i>pumpkin</i>
<i>cantaloupe</i>	<i>raspberries</i>
<i>cauliflower</i>	<i>spinach</i>
<i>cranberries</i>	<i>squash</i>
<i>cucumbers</i>	<i>sweet pepper</i>
<i>cooked eggs</i>	<i>watermelon</i>

UNSAFE FOODS

<i>apple seeds</i>	<i>decorative</i>
<i>birdseed</i>	<i>bamboo</i>
<i>caffeine</i>	<i>dog food</i>
<i>candy</i>	<i>cat food</i>
<i>chocolate</i>	<i>fried foods</i>
<i>canned food</i>	<i>fruit pits</i>
<i>cassava</i>	<i>peanuts</i>
<i>catnip</i>	<i>peanut butter</i>
<i>cheese</i>	<i>pepper</i>
<i>junk food</i>	<i>raw eggs</i>
<i>onions</i>	<i>raw meat</i>
<i>garlic</i>	<i>rhubarb</i>
<i>crickets</i>	<i>salt</i>
	<i>insects not raised for pet food</i>



EXERCISE & SOCIAL NEEDS

Activity

Sugar gliders are nocturnal and very light-sensitive, therefore, they are most active and loud at night. They are extremely sociable and require lots of attention from their pet parents.

Play

Gliders love foraging, playing games, and exploring. They should get a minimum of two hours per day of playtime with you outside their cage, even if they have a very large habitat or a wheel in their cage. It's important to enrich their habitat with lots of fun toys that are changed out regularly to keep them active and prevent them from getting bored.

Wheels

Your wheel should be a minimum 12 inches in diameter. Never use wheels that have bars or any internal rotating bearings since tails, toes, and other body parts can get caught and cause serious injuries. Gliders often jump in the wheel while they are running so wheels with middle supporting beams should never be used. Unlike with most pocket pets, a wheel with a mesh floor base is best because gliders grip the ground as they run.

Exercise Balls

Do not use an exercise ball for your sugar glider.

Pet-Proofing

Make sure to glider-proof before play by covering outlets and cords, putting away anything you don't want chewed on, moving houseplants, blocking any small space you cannot reach into such as under the fridge, and securing other pets in a different area or room.

COMPANIONSHIP

Mental Stimulation

Sugar gliders are very social, smart animals with lots of energy. They need to spend time with and bond not only with humans but other gliders as well. Without the companionship of other sugar gliders, they can become lonely and depressed, often resulting in illness or even death. Bonding with your glider also allows them to become more comfortable around you, prevents fear-based aggression, and gives them confidence.

Bonded Buddies

Gliders are communal animals and will be happiest when living with other sugar gliders. It is strongly recommended to keep a minimum of two gliders at a time. Unaltered gliders should be kept only with other gliders of the same sex. It is generally recommended to neuter male gliders and keep females intact as spay surgeries are much more invasive and riskier to perform.



SOCIAL NEEDS

BONDING WITH YOUR SUGAR GLIDER

Key Components of Training

TRUST • POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT • CONSISTENCY
REPETITION • PATIENCE

Tips

Spend time around your glider in a location that allows them to come to you if they want to be pet but gives them space to leave if they don't feel like being touched, such as in a screen tent or small room. Offer treats for them to lick off your fingers during this time to encourage them to get used to your hands and being touched.

Every time you approach your glider's habitat, bring a small treat for your pet so they learn to associate you with pleasant things and look forward to your visits. Never feed treats through cage bars since this can encourage your sugar glider to nip fingers. Offer treats with an open palm when possible.

Let your glider hang out with you during the day by putting them in a fleece bonding pouch and wearing it around your neck. This way, they can get used to your scent, voice, and movement while having a safe, comfortable place to nap.

Speak softly to your glider and call them by their name so they get used to your voice and learn their name.

Do an activity where they can hear your voice such as reading out loud, talking on the phone, or talking to your glider. They love stories!

The more time you spend with your glider, the sooner they will become comfortable with you.



HANDLING & GROOMING

SAFE HANDLING

Picking Up Your Sugar Glider

It is ideal to allow your gliders to come to you before reaching in to pick them up as this develops trust. Talk to your sugar glider and let it sniff your hand before you pick it up to announce that you are coming. Most sugar gliders will crawl right into your hand, especially if they know you. If your glider is not bonded to you yet, you may want to encourage them to crawl into your bonding pouch. If they do not go into it on their own, gently scoop your glider from underneath and place them in the bonding pouch. When holding a sugar glider in your hands, unless you are in a glider-proof room, cup your hands gently around them so they cannot leap from you. If the room is glider-proof, you can let your pet run up and down your arms and along your body and allow them to glide to safe surfaces.

GROOMING

Nails

Sugar glider's nails grow fast and will need to be trimmed regularly. They have 5 fingers on their hands. They have 5 toes, but only 2 toenails will need to be trimmed. The big toe is clawless and the 2nd and 3rd claws are partially fused together (they use this to groom themselves) and do not need to be trimmed. Holding your glider still, cover the toe with your finger so only the nail is exposed, and use a human nail clipper to clip the clear part of the nail. If you accidentally clip the pink vein (or quick) dip your pet's foot in styptic powder to stop the bleeding. It can be helpful to have a second person holding the animal, to give them lots of treats, and to keep sessions short. Alternatively, view our events page on our website for our nail trim clinic dates and we can do it for you!

Dental Care

You do not need to brush your sugar glider's teeth, but they are prone to abscesses so you should monitor their ability to eat and bring them to the vet when necessary.

Bathing

Do not bathe your sugar glider. Gliders are very clean animals and keep themselves well-groomed. If you notice that your glider is not keeping themselves clean, their fur is looking disheveled, or they have bald spots from over-grooming, your pet may be ill or distressed and should see a vet.

Brushing

Sugar gliders should not need to be brushed, but some do appreciate being gently brushed with a toothbrush.



HEALTH

GENERAL INFORMATION

Lifespan

Sugar gliders live an average of 12 to 15 years.

Reproduction

Unlike all other pocket pets, sugar gliders are marsupials. This means that while they are only pregnant for 15 to 17 days, their joeys (babies) stay in a special pouch for an additional 70 to 74 days to finish growing. Joeys are generally weaned 16 to 17 weeks after they come out of their mother's pouch. They become sexually mature and can reproduce once they have been out of the pouch for about 16 weeks.

Male gliders should be neutered to reduce illnesses, aggression, and allow them to be housed with females. Spaying females is invasive and risky and not often recommended.

Routine At Home Health Checks

At least once a week, spend some time examining your pet's fur, skin, and teeth for any physical changes such as lumps, wounds, overgrown nails, poor coat quality, etc. If any abnormalities are found, it is a good idea to make an appointment with your veterinarian for assessment, as any health concerns can progress very quickly.

Annual Exam

All sugar gliders should be given a yearly veterinary exam to ensure they stay in good health. Gliders do not require any vaccines.

SIGNS OF ILLNESS

Like all pocket pets, sugar gliders are very good at hiding when they get sick so if you see any of the following signs get in contact with your veterinarian immediately:

ANY BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

OVERGROWN TEETH

HEAD TILT

LETHARGY

CHANGES IN EATING OR DRINKING

VOMITING

DEFENSIVE AGGRESSION

CHANGES IN URINATION OR DEFECATION

DISINTEREST IN TREATS

DISINTEREST IN INTERACTION

PROLONGED SHAKING OR SHIVERING

POOR COAT QUALITY



HEALTH

COMMON ILLNESSES

Hind Leg Paralysis

Sugar gliders are very delicate and require a carefully balanced diet with appropriate levels of calcium or they will develop hind leg paralysis due to calcium deficiency. This is a deadly disease and your pet needs to be seen by a vet immediately if any signs are presented. *Symptoms include shaking, lethargy, lack of coordination, swollen toes, broken bones with no apparent cause, limping, and, of course, loss of use of hind legs.*

Self-Mutilation

Sugar gliders are extremely emotional creatures. Sometimes when they are injured, stressed, or depressed they will chew on parts of their body, particularly their tail and abdominal areas. Gliders can get depressed after losing a cagemate or if they are kept alone. Gliders make a particular noise when self-mutilating that sounds like a combination of a cry and a “crab.” A glider who is self-mutilating should be seen by a vet immediately, both to treat any injuries and to determine the cause of their distress. *Symptoms include chewing on themselves, hair loss, sores, lack of energy, and personality change.*

Abscesses

Occasionally, sugar gliders can develop abscesses in their mouth. Usually caused by a bacterial infection, these swollen areas are often fluid-filled and may need to be drained. If you suspect your glider may have an abscess, they must be seen by a vet who can prescribe antibiotics and determine if it needs to be drained or not. *Symptoms include facial swelling, disinterest in eating, difficulty eating, and lethargy*

Obesity

If a sugar glider starts overeating, their diet isn't balanced, or they aren't exercising enough - they can become obese. This extra weight can make a glider lethargic and over time, can cause heart disease, liver disease, pancreatic disease, and arthritis. A vet may recommend changing the diet, reducing treats, or increasing the amount of exercise time to get your pet to a healthier weight. *Symptoms include weight gain, lack of energy, and difficulty breathing.*



BEHAVIOR

All sugar gliders sound and act a little differently. Only by spending time with them will you fully be able to understand them. Below is a general guide of their communication to get you started.

VOCALIZATION

BEHAVIOR	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
Crabbing	A loud locust-like sound.	<i>Wanting to be left alone. When they do this, don't pull away or move forward, just freeze until they stop. This could be a warning before biting and quick movements may provoke them.</i>
Barking	Small dog yipping.	<i>Not totally understood, but it may be to call over members of their colony or to warn of a threat.</i>
Purring	Like a cat's purr.	<i>Feeling content and happy.</i>
Short Hissing	Almost grunt-like.	<i>They are constipated and trying to defecate, often accompanied by an arched back and tail sticking up.</i>
Long Hissing	Longer hiss with a change in pitch.	<i>Annoyance.</i>
Drawn-Out Hissing	Very long, drawn-out hissing.	<i>"Come here right now!"</i>
Chirping	A clicking noise.	<i>A sound often made while eating food they enjoy.</i>
Chattering	Teeth chattering, sometimes with low-pitched squeaks.	<i>Talking to other gliders.</i>

BODY LANGUAGE

BEHAVIOR	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
Scent Marking	Rubbing their head on something.	<i>Males have a scent gland on the top of their head that they will rub on objects to mark them.</i>
Sneezing	Sneezing into their paws.	<i>They use their saliva to aid in grooming.</i>
Biting	Either a nip or a hard bite; usually on humans' fingers or hands.	<i>Warning or a defense mechanism if feeling threatened or upset. Instead of disciplining, redirect their attention to promote good behavior.</i>
Depression	Lethargic with flat ears and a miserable expression.	<i>Lonely or bored. This can lead to anorexia or self-mutilation and is very dangerous.</i>
Standing on Hind Legs	Standing on hind legs with head tilted up, holding their mouth open to look bigger, showing teeth.	<i>Afraid or defensive.</i>
Hopping	Jumping from side to side or leaping around.	<i>Feeling playful.</i>



SUGAR GLIDER SUPPLY CHECKLIST

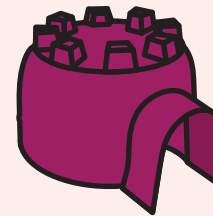
CAGE

4 cubic feet per glider minimum.



SHELTER

Gliders like to hide in shelters when they are nervous or relaxing.



WATER BOTTLE



FOOD DISH

Ceramic is best to prevent chewing.



FOOD

MNPPR recommends Critter Love® Complete - Sugar Glider Staple or Exotic Nutrition® HPW (High Protein Wombaroo) Original diet along with a daily fruit and vegetable salad. Do not give your glider pellet food.



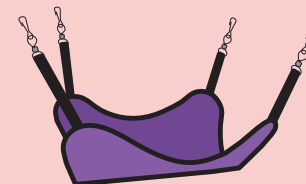
BEDDING

Anti-pill fleece only.



HAMMOCKS

Sugar gliders love hammocks! Monitor for chewing.



WHEEL

12" diameter minimum. No rotating bearings, floor bars, or middle bar. Mesh base is ideal.



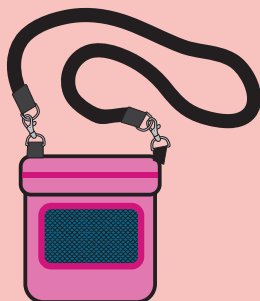
BED

Many pocket pets enjoy relaxing in a cozy bed such as a dog or cat bed, a small animal bed, or extra fleece. Monitor for chewing.



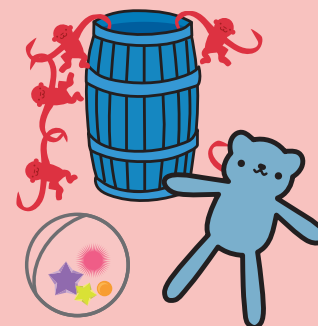
BONDING POUCHES

Very important for bonding with your gliders!

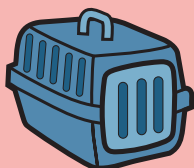


ENRICHMENT

Foraging toys, interactive toys, stuffed animals, etc. Check out our homemade toys page for ideas.



PET CARRIER



DISCLAIMER AND CREDITS

DISCLAIMER

All information shared by MN Pocket Pet Rescue is researched, up to date, and accurate to the best of our ability. We are not a licensed veterinary organization and do not intend to present ourselves as such. All educational material contains our best recommendations for care specific to each species. However, all animals are different and some may have unique needs. MN Pocket Pet Rescue does not assume any liability for the well-being of any animal not under our care. Always use your best judgment and follow veterinary recommendations whenever necessary. If you have any questions or find inaccurate information please contact us.

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