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This issue dedicated in loving memory of Magnum (Mr. Mags)
2000 - September 10, 2009

Feeding Your Skunk on a Budget: Raising Super Worms

Getting Started

You will need containers for the worms in the different life stages. For the worms themselves, I use something called a Cricket Keeper. It has tubes they crawl up in and I can feed them without touching them. For the beetles, I use a plastic container the size of a sweater box with holes for air. Mine has a lid on it but they don't seem to be able to climb out. I add empty toilet paper rolls for the beetles to climb on. The pupating chambers should have small compartments so each worm is separate. Plastic bead boxes from a craft store are an inexpensive choice. For the ones that have pupated, I use a plastic container the size of a margarine container with air holes.



In the pupating stages you can use bran or oatmeal for bedding. For the beetles and worms, you can use a mixture of 3 of the following: wheat bran, wheat germ, corn grits, oat bran or oatmeal. I also add powdered milk to increase the nutritional value. You can add laying mash to the mixture too. Some people add calcium or powdered vitamins.

The number of animals you will be feeding will decide how many containers you start out with. It takes a while to go through the life stages, so you might want to start with room for at least 50 worms.

You will also need to have a source for the breeding stock. You can purchase from stores that carry reptile supplies or order from a company like Grubco, www.grubco.com. Before putting the worms in the pupating chambers, feed them for a week or so. They do not eat again until they are beetles and they will die in the pupating chambers if they are not well nourished going in.

Pupae

As the worms turn into pupae, move them to a separate container about the size of a margarine container. Make sure there are air holes. Use wheat bran or oatmeal as bedding. Pupae must be kept in a dark room or closet. It takes about 2 weeks for the pupae to turn into beetles. As the time gets closer, the pupae will darken and grow legs. They are about to turn into beetles at that stage.



Beetles

When your beetle emerges, it will be hungry. Move the beetles to the beetle container. The beetle container should have at least an inch of the bedding material. Once a day add a small amount of raw vegetables. Start small, too much will not be eaten and may turn bad. The beetles will lay eggs everywhere and you don't want to throw out the baby worms with the rotten food. I have read each female beetle will lay 500 eggs. I have no idea if this is true. Notice they will get right to the business of breeding. You won't see the eggs at all. Do not change the bedding at this time. After a month, move the beetles into a container with fresh bedding. The eggs laid by the female beetles will grow into baby worms.



Baby Worms

By now you will have a container that looks like nothing is inside it. Have faith. You will have to feed the babies every day. After 2 or 3 weeks, you will see them moving around. They will continue to grow into an adult super worm. It will take 4 to 6 weeks for them to be big enough to feed. At that time, I move them to the Cricket Keeper with fresh bedding and clean the old cage to start over. I have noticed that a higher number of worms complete the pupating life cycle from my own stock than from the worms I have bought.



Helpful Tips

When choosing your containers, get ones that won't shatter when the air holes are drilled. Some people use the canisters that film comes in for pupating chambers. It is important to remember that the worms will not pupate unless they are in a dark room, pupae also. Beetles and super worms should be housed in a room with natural sunlight. The bedding you provide serves a double purpose, they eat it also. The more nutritious the bedding, the more nutrition the worms will provide when fed. By using the Cricket Keeper, I never have to touch the worms. It is also an easy way to serve them as I have a number of skunks. I use a plastic fork to move them around in the other life stages. When I move the worms to the Cricket Keeper, I wait until they are a decent size and use a tool for scooping litter boxes. Again, I do not have touch them.

	Crickets	Mealworms	Superworms	Roasted Waxworms
Moisture%	76.31	66.07	59.67	2.90
Protein%	17.53	19.7	22.28	24.08
Total Fat%	4.79	9.78	17.1	56.80
Total Dietary Fiber%	1.4	2.6	2.1	2.52
Ash%	1.28	1.55	1.15	1.93
Vitamin D3 (IU/100g)	318	276	171	N/A

Maria Ellis, April 2007

Featured Product

Supplement Profile: Pet Span by Nature's Balance



I am often asked, "Why PetSpan? Can't I just use Chlorella?"

PetSpan contains Chlorella, but it is so much more than that. PetSpan is proven to be world's richest natural resources of minerals, vitamins, high quality protein and essential fatty acids in maintaining good pet health and in the fight against degenerative disease and viral infection. It contains most components of the B vitamin complex, especially B12, which is not present in most supplements. B12 is particularly important in the health maintenance of older age animals.

It contains 3% RNA (reduction of RNA production is associated with the aging process) and 0.3% DNA (cellular reproductive factors) by weight. PetSpan delivers 17 times the RNA found in sardines, the food most often recommended as an RNA supplement.

Three anti-oxidant vitamins which help to control over production of free radicals, which in excess can damage DNA, corrode cell membranes, alter biochemical compounds and kill cells, beta-carotene (vitamin A), vitamins C & E are all found in PetSpan in one of nature's highest levels. Excess free-radicals play a major role in the onset & development of chronic conditions such as cancers, heart disease, arthritis and respiratory conditions.

The Chlorophyll contained in PetSpan helps to oxygenate & purify the blood supply and build red blood cells. It cleanses tissues, kidneys, liver and bowels, all areas vulnerable to diseases due to exposure to air pollution, water supply and food sources.

Chlorella's most outstanding feature, and one that sets it apart from other "superfoods", is its proven ability to assist the body in detoxifying harmful air, water, and food-borne "heavy metal" and chemical pollutants; precursors to many of today's common degenerative disease conditions. As a source of assimilable essential nutrients, chlorella has few if any peers, 19 amino acids, including all eight "essentials" are present in excellent ratios, the highest quantities of chlorophyll and RNA/DNA ever discovered within a natural source.

Documented benefits of Chlorella used in PetSpan

*Scientific reports on Chlorella done in Japan in 1992 show recorded significant increases in concentrations of blood erythrocytes (red blood cells), leucocytes (white blood cells), platelets and significant increases in albumin.

*Corrects abnormal heart rhythms, Increases Natural Killer (NK) immune cell count, significant protective effects against numerous cancer cell lines, relieves arthritic conditions, balances sugar highs/lows seen in diabetes and hypoglycemia, accelerates wound healing and tissue repair.

*Animals recovering from surgery will benefit from PetSpan's unique ingredient known as CGF which has been shown to have a significant effect upon the cell-mediated immune response and aids the regeneration of damaged tissue.

*PetSpan can be used in conjunction with other therapies for specific disease states such as to reduce the leukocyte-diminishing effects of chemotherapy in the treatment of cancer, to prevent or delay the recurrence of malignant metastases following surgical removal of the primary tumor, to improve conditions of animals with autoimmune conditions.

The importance of Albumin and the PetSpan Connection

Levels of serum albumin are an extremely accurate indicator of overall health. Albumin levels are so accurate as a prognostic tool that some hospitals now favor this screening method over the existing APACHE II morbidity and mortality scoring system. Low albumin levels exist at the onset and progression of virtually every non hereditary degenerative disease process, including cancers and cardiovascular heart disease. PetSpan helps to raise an animal's level of serum albumin. A correct ratio of albumin to globulins is desirable in the blood of a healthy animal. Albumin is the most abundant protein found in the bloodstream, constantly being produced by a healthy liver. However, the liver slows down the production of albumin once an animal has reached maturity. The condition of decreasing albumin and increasing globulin levels is directly linked to the efficiency of the immune system, the trans-capillary delivery of essential nutrients and the ability of the animal to purge toxins. In animals, as in humans, hypoalbuminemia (low albumin levels) is linked to virtually every pathological disease state.

Other important roles of Albumin

It is the most powerful natural antioxidant yet discovered, it controls the delicate balance of water between the three compartments of the body [the blood, connective tissue (in the process of aging, it is known to "dry" out) and the cells]. Albumin protects against heart disease by binding and transporting fatty acids. It detoxifies the fluid surrounding cells in the connective tissue and binds circulating waste products of cell metabolism such as heavy metals, chemical toxins and drug residues before transporting them to the liver for breakdown and removal. High albumin levels have been shown to extend the lifespan of cells in vitro and to prevent the mutation of cancer lines. Optimal levels indicate sound kidney and liver function and an unstressed immune system, while low levels are proving to be an extremely accurate predictor of morbidity and mortality.

Featured Skunk

Wratha

Hey ya'll, stomp party time...wwoooooo! Its skunkies gone wild time! My name is Wratha and I'm gonna tell ya my story and it's a wild ride. I am an unwanted child from birth. I got taken away from my real parents with a lot of other skunkies at a real young age and taken in some kinda trade market. We all got stuffed into some kinda cubicle to be poked and prodded and goggled at while some rough traders bid on us. I got to see many of my fellow cage-mates go some to some nice people, and some to some really stupid people.

I kept getting ignored I guess because the first person I met was so stupid they wanted to feed me cat food and keep me locked up in a cage, so I hissed and stomped and tried to bite him. I kept this attitude since almost every one that came in to buy one of us was just about as stupid... they had no clue how to care for a skunk...especially a princess like me. It soon ended up with just me and another male skunk left. They brought in some more babies...but they all left in time except for me and the male skunkie. I got to know him pretty well and started to date him...(well its not like I had any other options).

Many months passed and one lady kept coming in to see me and my boyfriend and kept asking about us, and even though I was getting even moodier she still insisted on bringing both of us home.

A few months went by and my boyfriend ticked me off telling me I looked fat...and I really was not in the mood. I had become very aggressive and tried to stay to my self and steal all the blankies I could find.

My stomach started to squirm and come out of me...boy I must have eaten something real rotten. Moments later there beside me lay three squirmy little things...and all they wanted was my attention. I pulled them close and guarded these precious things that knew and treated me like the queen I was.

The lady that had been caring for me decided she could not keep these little bundles and called around to find them homes. No way is anyone taking them from me...let one get a step away from me and I would pull them right back. After a few weeks we all went on a trip and stayed at a new house. One morning while I was eating, I got separated from my babies and boy did I ever put up a fight, but the human that had me had some pretty thick skin because he did not let go no matter how hard I tried to get away. I could hear my babies crying and I was frantic. I climbed over the pen looking for them and paced and hissed and stomped. I knew my babies were getting too big for me but still, they were MINE.

Later that day I went back home with the first lady and she also brought one of my babies with us. I miss the other two but at least I am not alone. Seven months passed and the lady decided she no longer had time for skunks and she made some calls. Next thing I know I am without my last baby and back at the house where I lost the other two at, and low and behold there was my favorite lil momma;s boy! He had always looked different than the others and had always been so scared of everything. He had grown up quite a bit. He would still have moments of being a scaredy cat but now he would run to the human with the thick skin for bravery snuggles.

I was allowed free roam of the house, and discovered many other skunks here as well, but I wanted no part of any of it. At night when all was quiet I would run all over, especially in one room that had hard floors and my stomps sounded really loud. Any time I would see another skunk or a human I would stomp and hiss. After a few days they all started stomping back at me??????? even the humans???? I have never seen that before!! The more I stomped, the more they stomped... and then the human did the weirdest thing....he pointed his butt at me. I did not know if I should laugh or be upset...so I stomped, hissed and pointed my butt at him. He copied me??? OK, I think he is either teasing me or trying to play. So I do a little creative stomp.charge him and then back-scratch....he copies me again. Huff. I prance around, stomp on his foot and back-scratch. He taps up to me and boings my tail. That's it, I am outta here! Next day is pretty much a repeat of this... but now the new lady is doing all the silly stuff as well. What is going on here? I find my son and he gets this silly look on his face, shook his head around so hard he falls over, then gets up on his tippy toes and does the funniest stomp run I have ever seen. He tells me relax... I missed you momma, but these people are fun to play with and give me great snuggles, good food and spoil me just as bad as you did.

Well it's now been two years, the longest I have ever stayed anywhere. I am comfortable in my new home. I have lots of friends and good food and except for a visit to the vet which had my belly feeling weird for a couple of weeks (no more kids for me). I am pretty much satisfied with my family. I don't snuggle up with the humans, but I don't bite them when they pick me up and I am still deciding on how bad the pets and snuggles and kisses really feel. They still do lots of silly stuff and chase me, or let me chase them, so I guess it's not too bad.

Well I am off...I see a gate to climb...and a shadow that needs to be put in place.

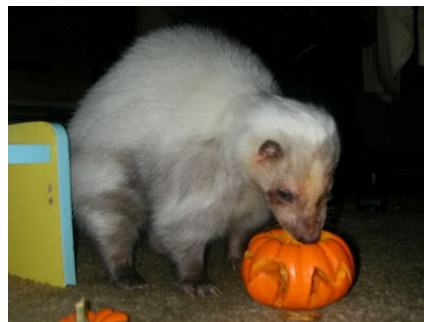


Dan Copeland, October 5, 2009

You can contact us if you need to re-home your skunk.
We can help you at no charge if you want to adopt a skunk.

Fun Tips

Need a fun idea for Halloween? Your skunks will love this one! Get a miniature pumpkin or squash, carve out a scary face and cut out a lid. Fill with your skunk's favorite worms and watch the fun.



Mary Vice
October, 2007

If you would like your skunk to be featured in our newsletter, send a story and pictures to:
StripedBandits@yahoo.com

Recipe of the Month

Kitty Litter Cake

CAKE INGREDIENTS

1 box spice or German chocolate cake mix
1 box of white cake mix
1 package white sandwich cookies
1 large package vanilla instant pudding mix
A few drops green food coloring
12 small Tootsie Rolls or equivalent

SERVING "DISHES AND UTENSILS"

1 NEW cat-litter box
1 NEW cat-litter box liner
1 NEW pooper scooper



Prepare and bake cake mixes, according to directions, in any size pan. Prepare pudding and chill. Crumble cookies in small batches in blender or food processor. Add a few drops of green food coloring to 1 cup of cookie crumbs. Mix with a fork or shake in a jar. Set aside.

When cakes are at room temperature, crumble them into a large bowl. Toss with half of the remaining cookie crumbs and enough pudding to make the mixture moist but not soggy. Place liner in litter box and pour in mixture.

Unwrap 3 Tootsie Rolls and heat in a microwave until soft and pliable. Shape the blunt ends into slightly curved points. Repeat with three more rolls. Bury the rolls decoratively in the cake mixture. Sprinkle remaining white cookie crumbs over the mixture, then scatter green crumbs lightly over top.

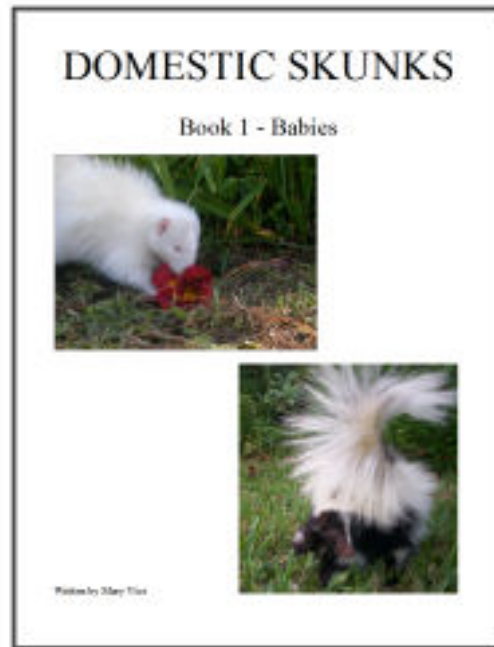
Heat 5 more Tootsie Rolls until almost melted. Scrape them on top of the cake and sprinkle with crumbs from the litter box. Heat the remaining Tootsie Roll until pliable and hang it over the edge of the box. Place box on a sheet of newspaper and serve with scooper. Enjoy!

Now Available For Purchase! Domestic Skunks, Book 1 – Babies

~ Testimonial from a happy customer ~

I love your book. I'm getting my first baby skunk in the next 2 weeks and I can't wait. Your book is the best I've seen. Please can you email me when you have books 2, 3 and 4.

Many thanks,
Patricia



\$15.50 each (includes domestic USA postage)

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Paypal your payment using the stripedbandits@yahoo.com account.

Question for Ashlar



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If there is a topic you would like to see on the newsletter, contact me at stripedbandits@yahoo.com.

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