



Sugarglider

Common Name: Sugarglider

Class: Mammalia

Subclass: Marsupialia

Order: Diprotodontia

Suborder: Phalangerida

Superfamily: Petauroidea Family: Petauridae

General Info:

Sugar Gliders are a species of marsupial possum that come mainly from Australia, Indonesia, and New Guinea.

They get the "glider" part of their name from a membrane extending from their wrists to their ankles that allows them to glide almost two hundred feet in one jump. This membrane is just a thin layer of skin that is covered in fur.

The "sugar" part of their name originated from the sweet foods they eat in the wild. Sugar gliders (commonly called SG) are tree dwelling, nocturnal creatures often living in groups of twenty to forty. In the wild, gliders may live up to seven years. but in captivity they usually live to be about fifteen.

Handling:



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Sugarglidors are sensitive animals and should not be a child's pet. They can be tamed with lots of careful handling and if started when they are young babies can be very cuddly and loving. They must be handled gently as their bone structure is very petite and somewhat brittle.

Do not be afraid of the noises your glider makes. They sound very fierce but they are just the way they communicate. They rarely bite people. However when you first bring your pet home, handle it very little as it is adjusting to its new environment and will be more touchy than later on.

Being that sugarglidors are a gliding animal, sometimes gliding over 15 feet in a single jump. You must be careful when having your glider out of their cage. Keep them in one room with the door closed, windows closed and any area with water such as a toilet with its lid down and or the drain covered.

Glidors are inquisitive creatures and can get caught in very peculiar places that are near impossible to get them out of. So be very aware of your gliders surroundings at all times.

It is important to handle your animal and get them used to your smell. When you first bring your glider home you can take a piece of cloth and rub it against your skin to scent it and place it in their cage to get them used to your smell. It will help them get used to you. This is important to the hygiene and grooming of the animal as you must clip their toenails to keep them healthy. Over grown toenails can catch and tear on things and cause great discomfort and possible infection if not clipped on a regular basis.

Temperature/Humidity:

Ideal daytime temperature for gliders should range between 70 - 78 degrees. Nighttime temperature should remain between 65 and 75 degrees. Keep them away from drafts and direct harsh sunlight.

Lighting:

Although nocturnal (mainly active at night) gliders don't require ultraviolet lighting, if it is part of the habitat design, it is recommended for 8 - 12 hours per day. The use of a timer will assist in maintaining an accurate schedule of light periods. If lighting is not part of the housing of your glider make sure they get daylight for 8-12 hours a day.

Habitat/Housing:

Housing is very important to a sugar glider. There has to be enough room for them to jump and get exercise. A cage at least 3 feet high and a 2 foot square bottom is the bare minimum to house a sugar glider.



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It is very cruel to keep a sugar glider in a small cage.

The wires on the cage should be small enough so they can't escape. Roughly about 1/4 inch apart. Usually a canary or parakeet cage has that size of bars.

Inside the cage should be a few items. First being their food and water dish. The food dishes should be washed everyday to keep them hygienic and the risk of illness down. I suggest a water bottle for their water. It is easiest to clean and you can attach it to the outside of the cage so they do not nawk on it.

To make the SG feel more like home, cut some branches off a tree. To make sure there are no harmful bugs or germs on the branches you must bake them in the oven at 300 degrees F for about 20 minutes. You can also include silk plant leaves around the branches.

They also love running wheels, and perches. I suggest wooden perches as sometimes the sandpaper ones can cause irritation to the gliders feet. Sugarglidiers also love things to cuddle in such as nesting boxes, socks, and fleece huts. Socks and fleece huts are great because once they are marked and smelling a little you can wash them. Many of these things you can find in the bird section of the pet store. Typically if its in the bird section the glider will like it too.

Substrate (Bedding):

Fill the pan in the bottom of your cage with pine shavings, corn cob, or crushed walnut bedding for birds. I find the walnut bedding is the easiest to clean. **DO NOT USE** cedar shavings as it can create a risk of respiratory infection.

Feeding, Watering and Nutrition:

Sugarglidiers are omniverous. They like fruit, nuts, just about anything sweet, bugs, and small animals such as baby birds and mice. They're quite willing to try new things, including human fingers. A lot of glider bites are more the result of curiosity than aggression!

Gliders have a tendency to get fat easily, so you need to be careful about fat intake. Not only is it unhealthy for a glider to be overweight, but it can hamper their ability to reproduce, Also, babies born to overweight parents are sometimes born blind or with impaired vision caused by fatty deposits in their eyes.

Nutritional requirements:

Gliders require a solid 75% fruit/vegetable and 25% protein diet. You need to keep their fat intake to a minimum. It can result in health problems later on and in any babies.



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Canned fruit is NOT an option because it contains preservatives and refined sugar which are harmful. You must supplement your gliders diet with added calcium so they are not at risk for metabolic bone disease which can become fatal in your pet.

Suggested food items:

Sugar Gliders are fond of many different types of food. Some that they particularly enjoy, but are not limited to, are as follows:

Apples, applesauce (baby food formula only, it contains vitamins), apricots, bananas, berries, bread, cantaloupe, carrots, cherries, corn, dates, dried fruit, eggs (boiled/raw), figs, grapes, honey, honeydew, insects (mealworms, crickets), meats (low fat turkey, boiled and skinless chicken, & feeder pinkie mice), melons, nuts (assorted raw & unsalted), papaya, peaches (NOT the pits, they are toxic), peanut butter, pears, pineapple, plums, pure fruit juices, raisens, strawberries, sunflower seeds, and sweet potatoes.

A good source of calcium for your glider is yogurt. DO not feed them low fat yogurt or weird types of yogurts that are out there. They like plain yogurt, sometimes they like the ones with fruit in them like peaches and or raspberry.

Sugar Gliders can be peculiar about what they eat. They may be willing to accept a certain food for a few days and then refuse it after a week. The following week they may eat the food item again. The bottom line is that they each have their own personality and tastes. It will just take time to find out what they like.

You also need to make sure you give your pet FRESH WATER every day. As a treat you can mix a bit of apple juice in with your gliders water HOWEVER do not do this often and make sure you change the water in their water bottle completely and rinse it out well the next day.

Some people suggest feeding once a day at dusk, while others will feed twice a day. Which method you choose should be dependent on your particular Sugar Glider. Are they still hungry in the morning? Feed them a small amount in the morning or give them more in the evening. DO NOT GIVE your Sugar Glider CHOCOLATE!! As with other animals, during digestion a toxin can be created. It may be harmful to Sugar Gliders as well, and certainly not worth the risk!

SAMPLE DIET:

Modified Taronga Diet:

These quantities are about right for two adult gliders for one day.



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Fresh or Frozen Fruit / Vegetables: Approximately 1/4 cup diced I don't worry so much about how much of which kind of fruit or vegetable, except to be sure I provide a good variety of things the gliders have seemed to enjoy in the past.

Hard Boiled Egg: 1/6 of one egg, with shell Gliders will quite often eat some or all of the shell, so leave it on. It's a great source of calcium, which they need in their diet.

Modified Leadbeaters Mix: 2 teaspoons **See recipe below.** As far as I'm concerned, this should be a staple item in every glider's diet. I've never met a glider who didn't love it; it's great for babies learning to eat, finicky young weanlings, lactating moms, and everyone else too!

Boiled Chicken: One small piece of meat daily (about 1 teaspoon), a piece of bone (one inch) twice weekly This is part of my solution to the "day-old chick" item in the Taronga diet. Crickets are the other.

Crickets: 2-3 large crickets per glider per day Crickets are a good source of protein and are inexpensive to buy at most pet stores or through mailorder. You will have to give these to your gliders one at a time and directly as crickets can easily get out of the gliders cages.

Monkey Chow: Keep in cage at all times. Usually keep about 2-4 biscuits in the cage. This is available from feed stores if you don't mind buying it 25 or 50 pounds at a time. You can also get it in smaller quantities from pet stores, but it costs a lot more that way. I leave it in the cage all the time, in case they feel like having a midday snack once in a while. They love it nearly as much as their fresh fruit, and it gives them something to chew on to wear down their teeth.

Yogurt: 1 - 2 tablespoons.

RECIPES

Modified Leadbeaters Mix

Apple Juice 1/2 cup

Honey 1/2 cup

Boiled egg 1 (I leave the shell on)

Gerber Baby cereal 1/2 cup (dry flakes)

Wheat Germ 1/4 cup



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Vitamins (optional) amount will vary depending on recommended dosage -- see below.

Dump everything in a blender and puree until lump free. I pour it into an airtight plastic container and freeze it, so it won't spoil before it's all used. It freezes to about the consistency of ice cream, so it's easy to scoop out a serving of it each night.

To figure out how much of your favorite vitamin supplement to add, figure that one recipe of Leadbeater's Mix is going to make roughly 50 glider servings, depending on how generously you scoop it. **DON'T OVERFEED VITAMINS!** Not only is it not good for your gliders, but it will give their urine a strong odor that we humans tend to find very offensive.

Other notes: As with all animal after handling, cleaning, changing bedding or washing feed dishes make sure you clean your hands and surrounding areas with a bleach water mixture or a antibacterial soap. Improper cleaning of sinks and bathtubs after animals have been in them or their housing, food dishes have been cleaned, can cause severe illness in children and adults.