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Welcome skunk owners and enthusiasts to our first newsletter.
We hope you will find helpful information for yourself and to share with others.
Our goal is that this will be the first of many more to come.

SPRING CLEANING

Now is the time to do a different type of spring cleaning. If you haven't already done so, you should take a good look in your kitchen cabinets and clear out any dangerous cleaners.

Skunks should not be exposed to chemicals or other toxins and common household cleaners can be the worst culprits of all.

Have you noticed the noxious smell on the detergent aisles in grocery stores? Do those smells make you sick or give you a headache?

Those smells come from the chemical scents and toxins in all those detergents and cleaning products. Those same chemicals and toxins wreak havoc on a skunk's system as well as your own.

A much safer and wiser choice is to use natural products. You may be surprised how well products that you probably already have do as a cleaner. Some also disinfect and as an added bonus, they will save you money. By having the following items on hand, you will be able to tackle any cleaning job in your house.

White distilled vinegar can be used as a general cleaner. Use it for cleaning floors (except wood), counters, appliances and glass to name a few. Vinegar can be used on wood floors, but after prolonged use or using too strong a mixture, it can strip the shine. Be sure to also read the manufacturer's warranty before using.

Baking soda is a good scouring agent and can be used to clean sinks, tubs and toilets. Borax is also great for cleaning those items.

Baking soda can be sprinkled on carpets for deodorizing. Another great tip is to dry your favorite herb in the oven after using it for tea, then mix with baking soda before sprinkling on carpet for a nice scent.

Lemon juice can be used to make things shine and sparkle.

Citric acid is great for cleaning electric coffee pots. White vinegar works well also.

A wonderful device called "Lotus®" super oxygenates water and turns it into a cleaning agent that deodorizes and kills bacteria. It is an easy way to clean glass with no streaks. It's been my experience that it even cuts through grease. Use it to clean any type of flooring. It's also great on pet stains and odors.

Thieves® is a natural cleaning product of blended essential oils made by Young Living.

Dr. Bronner's soap is an all natural soap product that can be used for cleaning.

Mary Vice/ April 1, 2009

CALCIUM

Metabolic Bone Disease

Calcium deficiency generically represents one possible cause for Metabolic Bone Disease. Metabolic Bone Disease is generally caused by one or more of the following: Too little calcium, protein or ultraviolet light; too much phosphorus or too little or too much vitamin D3. Less common, though possible, Metabolic Bone Disease can be caused from diseases of the kidney, liver, small intestine or thyroid glands. Any of these can cause disruption of metabolic functions that affect calcium absorption.

MBD is almost always caused by human error through bad diet. An animal living in the wild in their normal environment would not get MBD. It is only after being raised in captivity, where the animal is not given a proper diet that MBD occurs.

Calcium, the most abundant mineral in the body, interacts with phosphorus to form calcium phosphate (the hard dense material which forms bone & teeth). Most of the calcium in the body is stored in this very usable form. Bone regeneration is a dynamic process and bone matter is constantly being reabsorbed & new deposits laid down. This means if MBD is caught early, it can be reversed, but in order for this to happen, you have to avoid the same mistakes that got your skunk to that point to begin with.

The most common error skunk owner's make is to choose the wrong calcium supplement. In reality, if your skunk is on the proper species appropriate diet, you won't need supplemental calcium.

There is a lot of incorrect information that is published regarding skunks and their diets. One of the most grievous errors is recommending to owners that their skunk should be using a product called Rep-Cal®. Rep-Cal® is a calcium product meant for reptiles, not mammals. There is no way to know how absorbable it is in a mammal. Too much excess leads to bone spurs and fused bones, which is being seen too much in the skunk world.

Two safer alternatives are ground egg shells and Diatomaceous Earth (DE). These are the only calcium supplements I feel safe in recommending. Bloodwork and Xrays will show you if your skunk is getting enough of the right type of calcium.

Mary Vice/ April 1, 2009



Did You Know?



The Domestic Striped Skunk is a member of the genus *Mephitis Mephitis*.

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.

Featured Rescue

A Story by Valdora

My story starts several years back in another home with another name and I am not too clear about a lot of the past memories since I have had to learn so much this year. Basically I know I was very loved by at least one member of my past family and was spoiled rotten by her. She did not completely understand me but she loved me so much she wanted to have more of me by wanting to breed me, so for years I have had to deal with female problems which make me very moody at times and make me hurt real bad. My mommy also thought it would be healthy for me to eat some very nasty tasting food that was hard and hurt my teeth all the time. Time passed and changes happened to me, but since I knew no different, I did not know that I was not normal. It had gotten hard for me to walk, and if I got scared or mad I had a trick I could do with my head that would make the scary things disappear. My life was pretty much routine for years until one day my mommy picked me up with tears in her eyes and started talking to some strange humans about me and then handed me over to a Vamp and Dragon????!!

Now that was scary and I did my trick and hid my eyes and tried to figure out what was going on. I was placed in a box with bars (what am I being arrested for???? Being too cute????) and then the box was put in another big metal box that the VampDragon thingies got in as well and every thing started shaking and swaying and shifting. Not being sure what is happening I put on my special cute face and try to bribe my guards into setting me free and they tell me everything is ok "Valdora", you're going to be just fine pretty girl "Valdora". Now I know something is wrong, My name is "POWDER"!!!! I have been wrongly convicted of crimes I have not done. What is wrong? How do I fix this?

After a while the big box stops and the VampDragons move my prison into a new and different home and release me from jail on bail and I do my best to plead innocent and sweet and CUTE!!! I get lotsa attention, even more than I got at home so I think I might be able to cute my way outta this fix. If only they would call me by my real name. Things are a lot different and scary for me, I am not used to getting attention from a male human and the Dragon is willing to give me all that I ask for and keeps calling me pretty girl (GOT THAT PART RIGHT!!!!!!) Valdora????? (blew it there) while he is petting me. I try to plead that they have the wrong skunk by digging at the ground while giving cute face every time they say my name wrong..."PRETTY GIRL" = sweet face..."Valdora"= tuck head and dig.

I am starting to wonder when my court date is so I can finally get outta this mess and clear my name (I dont like this Valdora, she must be a real bad girl), when I find out I have a VET appointment. Woo Hooooooo I gets to plead my case. After a very long wait, court proceedings begin and the bailiff vet tech comes in and places me on the Scales of Justice.... and proclaims 23 pounds. OK!!!, I am in the wrong court...A woman's weight SHOULD **NOT** be known, I want to claim a mistrial NOW!!!!!! Too late the Judge Vet comes in to the court and after lots of prodding, poking, stabbing and being forced to drink a nasty tasting truth serum, I was then laid on a table to have my mug shots taken. Then I was shuffled out of court while the public offender pleads my case with Judge Vet. Wait a minute...I'm cute...I DEMAND a real attorney in this. The Judge Vet then enters the special chambers that VampDragon and I are being held and shows them my mug shots. WOW, horrible pic's, all I see are bones and lotsa gray mass around...which side is UP???? The Judge Vet has to spin the pics around several times cause even he is confused???? OK like I saidtime for MISTRIAL!!!! The gray mass on my back is even larger than the mass on the front. Now not only do I demand mistrial but I want a new photographer, one that can show my true inner beauty (strike that ...that's what these pics show). Lots debating goes on and finally I get released on parole for two weeks while my case goes into deliberation. My reform officers VampDragons fix me a meal of weird tasting soft stuff that smells real good and actually has some flavor to it. Hmmm prison food is not as bad as I have heard. Wait a minute...what are those sounds, and what are those weird looking things that are pouncing on my parole officers' feet??? ASHLAR, VALDAMERE, VIZAGI, MARIAH and GODIVIA????? OOHOO Nooo, this is the BIG TIME with some real tough looking long term prisoners, and boy are they good at bribing the guards. Even though they are so tiny and look funny I think they have a better chance than me on getting outta this place. Whoops I did I say that out loud??? One of them funny looking skinny things just did a stomps-by-pooof????!! Tough crowd. As it turns out, they are skunks. Wow, that's what they look like, must be babies though, they are half the size of me and they have legs and can run. The one called Godiva comes over to me and tells me she used to be big too but not near as big as me. It hurts my feelings and she scares me too so I go hide in my cell. My cell is quite large and has a cave and "SOFT FUZZY" flooring and news paper. The dragon lays inside my cell with me and brushes and pets me for hours. This is not bad. He then leaves but he does not close the door to my cell so I crawl out and check out my surroundings. I can see the Vamp sitting at a desk and I try to see what she is doing so I sit up to see better. Vamp then reaches down and pets me for a while. After time she stops and I sit up again and she pets me again till she has to go to sleep. I can see the Dragon so I crawl over to him and sit up for him so he can see me and he reaches down and picks me up and snuggles and pets me for more hours till he has to go to sleep too. He puts me in my cell and lays outside and pets me till I go to sleep. He tries to put the Soft Fuzzie Floor stuff over me but I throw it off and lay on the news paper. If I am going to be in prison I don't want to be getting any special favors and luxuries that might add to my time.

A few days pass and I'm starting to feel grumpy, I miss my old home even though the food here is better and I get lotsa attention, I still miss my mommy. My stomach has started to hurt and my female problems are acting up, and since I had never seen another skunk (let alone a cute male skunkie like that Ashlar in the cell down the way from me), the pains are even worse this time than before. I am mad at the dragon cause he tried to trick me into staying longer by being sooo nice to me so now I growl at him and snap at his hand if he gets close, nope no more special treatment. I want to go home. I have accepted the soft fuzzie floor thing since I found I can hide under it and newspaper is just so much more fun to shred and Mardi Gras with. I have been able to walk even though it's only a few steps before I get tired and have to crawl. I'll sit and dig at the floor and try to drag the Vamp to me for pets and it usually works. I don't mind pets from her since we girls gotta stick together and she did talk with my mommy so maybe I can bribe her to sneak me back.

Finally my second court appearance comes, and I go through all the same as last time and the Scales of Justice are a little nicer to me. I am 19 pounds and every one is pleased. Good, maybe I'll at least get a lighter sentence. If they don't figure out that I am innocent to begin with. My mug shots show that I have a huge gas bubble and that is why my stomach has been hurting, since I am not used to eating good food my body has had trouble digesting it. It is also discovered I had back feet (I forgot about them since the last time I saw them was years ago) and one of my toenails had grown into the bottom of my foot. They also found and removed a tic (What??? I had been "BUGGED"! I'll bet Dragon had something to do with it). We all get sent away after the Judge Vet gives my wardens some meds for me, apparently today is not the day for my release.

I am mad mad mad now so I throw the fuzzie out of my cell and shred the newspaper then I throw it all over the prison as far as I can crawl. I remembered I had back feet so I try to see them. I can't but I can feel it touch my back and wow I can scratch my own back. Now I definitely don't need the Dragon.

Things get pretty routine, every few weeks go by and I get another court appointment, get sent back to prison, I trash the prison, grump and snarl at Vamp Dragon. I can walk further, scratch further up my back, (can even reach my ears now), my belly no longer drags on the floor, I can no longer hide my eyes with my trick, and that really makes me mad so I hide under blankets and peek out. I try to move in with the cute Ashlar and it works for a while till I find out I can fit in his cave, and then he gets mad and won't come near me. I find the secret hiding spot of the other girls, Maria and Godiva and they let me move in with them. Godiva reminds me that she used to be big as well and she tells me I'm looking good. I am almost down to the size she was when she got locked up here. I ask how long of a sentence she got and she said Lifetime. Wow I feel sorry for her, but she says not to worry, the snuggles are good, the food is great, she just doesn't think she gets enough. I tell her she can have some of mine cause I am liking all the things I can do now that I am lighter, and after a few more pounds I might be able to escape. I hear a quacked "silly girl, there is no escape, and besides there is lotsa cool toys and adventure spots". Turns out The Valdamere was tucked in with us and he goes and shows me his hidey spot. Wow I have never seen so many fuzzies. He had collected them all himself, and he even had some snow he had saved from the time he was a bomb detecting skunk.

I have been locked up here now for seven months and I am down to 10 pounds. I get good food, people and skunkies that care about me, all the toys and fuzzies and newspaper I want. I have brothers and sisters now. Hmmmm, I guess that means I have a mommy and a daddy now too. I walk out and see the Dragon and sit up (this is getting trickier to do since I don't have all the extra padding to balance on). He picks me up and tells me I am a beautiful girl (yeap Valdora). You know what, I actually like that name now. I think to myself I hope they never find the real Valdora, as I settle down for the first time in months in my daddy's arms and go to sleep, I think to myself, I am going to do what ever it takes at my next court appointment to see that I get sentenced to life here.
Dan Copeland/ November 2006



The first picture is Valdora at 23 pounds. The second picture is her now.

Valdora came to us 3 years ago at the age of 4. She had been with the same family since she was a baby, then all of a sudden the entire family developed allergies to her. They had the bright idea to breed her, so she was never spayed. She was 23 pounds when she came to us, so we couldn't spay her until she lost weight. It was 10 months before she lost enough weight for the surgery. Her ovaries were covered with cysts when they were removed. She probably wouldn't have lived much longer had she remained where she was. She wasn't able to walk for a few months until she lost enough weight for her legs to support her, but although her legs are now deformed, she walks and runs and begs like any other skunk.

If you have an overweight skunk and need help, contact us.
If you would like your rescue to be featured in our newsletter, send a story and pictures to:

StripedBandits@yahoo.com

Fun Tips

Skunks are extremely curious creatures and it can sometimes be hard to keep them entertained. It is important to keep your skunk active for their physical and mental well being. One of our favorite ways to keep our skunks curious and healthy is the Box O' Crickets.

We take a shoe box, tape the lid down and cut a hole in the lid large enough for a skunk head to fit. Drop some crickets in the box and add a skunk. It's possible a skunk may be unsure of what to do at first, but once they realize what's in the box, the apprehension is gone. It's a fun way to give a healthy snack and keeps the crickets contained so even the slowest skunk can get some.

Mary Vice/ April 1, 2009



Topics discussed recently on Striped Bandits

Skunk toys ~ Calcium and Taurine supplements ~ Skunk mischief ~ Tons of pictures!

If you would like to join the fun, you can apply to join our message board at:

<http://stripedbandits.proboards.com>

Invisable

Zee

Hello Folks
I'd like to
introduce
my friend
STRIPE



GRRAP
GRRAP
Quack
PHHEEEECK
CHHARRUUP
Peep

Whoops
I forgot to mention he is a
"TAD" shy.



The Adventures of the Invisable Man and his pet skunk, Stripe

By Fadedand

Sprouting Your Own Sprouts

Sprouts are a better food choice for your skunk than vegetables. They are less inflammatory and closer to what a skunk would actually find to eat in their natural environment. With inflammation being the leading cause of disease and death in domestic skunks, you should aggressively do everything you can to eliminate inflammatory items in your skunk's diet. Sprouts are cost effective and easy to do. You will not only save money, but also time because sprouts do not require the chopping that vegetables require.

The only supplies you need to start sprouting your own sprouts are mason jars and a clean linen bag or cheesecloth. I found that cheesecloth allows the tinier seeds to escape, so I prefer to cut up a linen bag to fit the opening of the jar with excess to drape over the sides.

Depending on the sprouts you choose, soak the beans for 8 hours to overnight. The next morning, drain the water, rinse the beans, then turn your jar upside down and tip it at an angle to allow drainage and air circulation and cover with a towel. You should rinse the beans twice a day, but quite honestly, I rarely have time to rinse more than once a day.

Once again, depending on your choice of sprout, they will be ready within 3 days. Do not rinse before putting them in the refrigerator. You don't want moisture on them once they go in the fridge. That's it!

You can get your sprouts and a wealth of information about sprouts at www.sproutpeople.com. You can also get your beans to sprout at your local health food store.

Mary Vice/ April 1, 2009



Skunk Show Reminder

Skunkie Fun Day is being held on October 10, 2009
Givhan's Ferry State Park, Ridgeville, SC

For information and registration form contact Landa Berry at mberry2@sc.rr.com.

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

You can get the items discussed in this newsletter at the following locations:

Lotus® ~ www.tersano.com or Ebay

Thieves® ~ Landa is a distributor. Contact her at mberry2@sc.rr.com

Diatomaceous Earth ~ Maria is a distributor. Go to www.foodgradede.com to purchase.

Sprouting information ~ www.sproutpeople.com

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