



## Sugar Glider care

Sugar gliders are marsupials (warm-blooded animals with a pouch like the kangaroo and wallaby). Gliders originate from New Guinea and Southern Australia where they spend most of their time living in the trees. Life expectancy is 12-15 years with proper diet and exercise levels. They possess a gliding membrane that stretches from their wrists to their ankles and allows them to "glide" from tree to tree. Sugar gliders are nocturnal animals, which means they spend much of their active time at night and sleep during the day. Once they start to bond with their new owners you can slowly get them to be more awake during the evening and day hours but keep in mind they are happiest at night. They are omnivores i.e. they eat both plant and animal matter. (see diet recommendations below) Male gliders have two scent glands used for marking territory. One gland is located on their belly and the other on the top of their head. They will mark objects by rubbing their bellies back and forth upon the object. They will also mark any females in their colony by rubbing the female's chin with their head. This will cause the males to have bald spots on their head and chest. Once neutered, these scent glands diminish. Female gliders have a pouch located mid-abdomen. Most sugar gliders will begin breeding somewhere between seven months to a year of age. Like kangaroos, gliders have a very short gestation period of 16 days after which they give birth to one to three hairless offspring that are smaller than a bee. The babies crawl up the fur of the abdomen, enter the mother's pouch and attach to a nipple where they remain for approximately two to three months. Approximately ten days after emerging from the pouch, the babies open their eyes and a month later they are ready to wean.

Housing: A wire cage is preferred and should be 20" X 20" X 20" or larger to provide plenty of space to climb. The wire used is 1" X 0.5" welded wire. Gliders enjoy chewing on wood and running in solid wheels. It is important to provide natural wood branches in the cage for chewing and climbing. Oak, fruitwoods (cherry, apple pear etc.), willow, and aspen are acceptable. Do not use any branch that has been sprayed with pesticides. You should bake branches at 200 degrees for ½ hour if you bring them in from outside. Small plastic bird toys are great and easy to clean. Be sure to clean entire cage monthly by placing in shower to rinse off for a few minutes, when the glider is out of cage playing. A nest box or cage pouch should be provided to give the glider(s) a dark place to hide and sleep. The box should be closed on all sides with a hole for entry/exit. Exposure to bright sun can damage their sensitive eyes. Plain white unscented toilet paper or paper towels or aspen chips can be used as bedding. Avoid using cedar or shavings impregnated with chlorophyll. These bedding materials can cause irritation to the eyes, nose, throat, lungs and skin. A under the tank heater can be placed on the outside side of the cage next to the cage pouch to provide more heat if house temperatures fall below 68 degrees. We do not recommend a heat rock in cages as these cannot be sanitized completely as they are porous and they get hot enough to burn the glider. Locate cage where no drafts are at and possible place bed sheet around sides and back of cage to help with temps and keeping debris into cage area. Provide a water bottle for the sugar glider to find, also add a little apple juice added to the water to help the glider find the bottle when entering a new cage

## Diet for Sugar Gliders

There is no simple over the counter diet for sugar gliders. The diets are multi-faceted and time consuming but in the long run you will have a happier and healthier glider if you feed a proper diet. We at CCs feed BML diet once a day. We place the BML cube in the cage around 4-5pm to allow time for it to thaw before the glider is up and ready to eat.

BML diet (Bourbon's Modified Leadbeaters diet) (CC's Exotic Pets uses and recommends this diet)

- ½ cup honey (do not use honeycomb, raw or unfiltered)
- Normal single serve yogurt (strawberry banana or other flavor)
- ¼ cup wheat germ
- 1 tsp Rep Cal Herptvite (blue label)
- 2 tsp Rep Cal non phosphorus w/ Vit D3 (pink label)
- 2 2 ½oz jars Stage 2 chicken baby food or other cooked chicken
- 1 hardboiled or scrambled egg
- ½-1 cup Apple Juice
- ½ cup dry baby cereal (rice, mixed or oatmeal- many like rice w/ banana flavor)
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1. Mix honey and yogurt blend well
2. Add wheat germ, vitamins, chicken, egg and blend well
3. Slowly add Apple juice and baby cereal
4. Blend well for 5 minutes
5. Pour into ice cube trays and freeze
6. This mix will feed 1-2 gliders for a month

You can double or triple the batch to make a few months worth at a time.

Feed:

1 tbsp BML

1 tbsp fruits

Small bowl of Sugar Glider pellet [www.pet-pro.com](http://www.pet-pro.com) Happy Glider kept in the cage at all times.

Insects (4-6 crickets OR 4-5 mealworms OR 6-8 waxworms) per week

\* Note all insects should be gut loaded and dusted with Rep Cal

Wax worms are fattening and should not be a regular part of the diet

Rotate insects

DO NOT feed lightning bugs

\*Be careful with fruit choices, goal should be a 2:1 Fruits- Protein

Do not feed pits, seeds, +/- skins (pesticides)

Avoid grapes and raisins since enough is not known about the effect on the kidneys of sugar gliders

Rotate fruits; do not be surprised if their tastes change frequently. There are other diets out there that people use, we have always had good luck with the BML and happy glider pellets.. In general they should get 33% protein and 67% fruits in their diet. Good examples of fruits include: papaya, oranges, bananas, strawberries, cantaloupe, mango, kiwi, peaches, honeydew melon, cucumbers, squash, bell peppers, carrots, sweet potatoes, bok choy, jicama, green beans.

For further questions please e-mail Nikki at [nikki.8671@gmail.com](mailto:nikki.8671@gmail.com)

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