

To the  
**RESCUE!**

Two tigers find  
a safe home at  
a zoo sanctuary.



## Kind Questions ?

## Meet Misty and Pouncer

In 2004, RedRover helped rescue two tiger cubs who were living in a house in Southern California. Many “exotic” animals like tigers are illegal to have as pets because houses are not good places for them to live—and it is dangerous for people! The two tigers, named Misty and Pouncer, were moved to the Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary, where they have lived ever since. Amy is a zookeeper who has taken care of the tigers their whole lives. She knows what each tiger likes and dislikes.

What do the tigers need to be happy and healthy? Amy says they need fresh water and lots of fresh meat. The tigers also like having a quiet place to hide, since

the sanctuary can get busy and loud. Just like cats at home, they need things to climb on. And also, like some cats in homes, these tigers like to push things off of raised surfaces!

The tigers also need **enrichment**, activities that help them train their brains and have fun. They play with things like pumpkins, pizza boxes, and steel barrels chained from the ceiling. They also seem to really like to paint! They get excited when they see the paint and act playful while rolling around in it to make their art. Their paintings are sold to help other animals in need.

Amy says it has been a special gift to care for Pouncer and Misty. “They feel like family.”

Now that you’ve read *Kind News*, challenge yourself with these questions.

1. After reading “The Truth Behind Teacup Pigs” and “Isabella the Rabbit Rescuer,” what do you think about having a pig as a pet? What do you think about having a rabbit as a pet? What do you think someone should consider before bringing a pig or a rabbit into their family?

2. In “Nature Recycles!” it states that animals help with the composting process, but also benefit from it. Is there something you help with in your community? What ways does your community of people (school, town/city, etc.) help you? Brainstorm volunteer projects that you’d like to participate in with your classmates.

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# kind News

2020  
MAR-APR

Rescuing  
rabbits  
p. 3

Meet Misty  
and Pouncer  
p. 8

## THE MYTH OF TEACUP PIGS

 **RedRover**  
Bringing Animals from Crisis to Care

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inside  
**THIS  
ISSUE:**



4

The myth of teacup pigs



6

The amazing world: Nature recycles!



8

To the rescue: Meet Misty and Pouncer

- 3 Humane Hero: Isabella the rabbit rescuer!
- 7 DIY: Make your own compost
- ? Where's Raja? Find Raja, from *The Restricted Adventures of Raja* app, hidden in *Kind News*.



**Curiosity Corner**



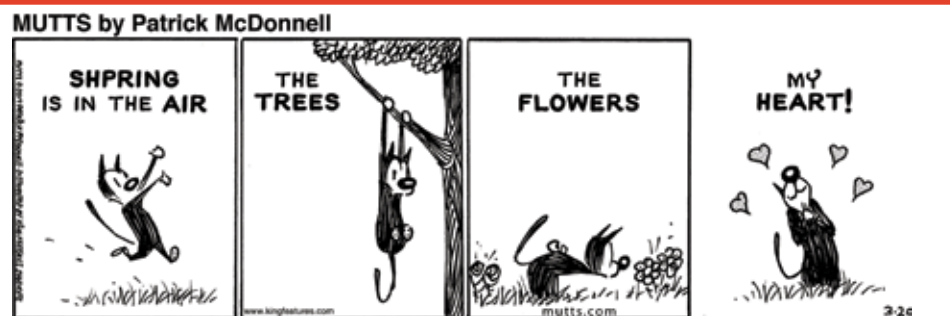
**Why are cats' tongues different than dogs' tongues?**

Have you ever noticed that cats' tongues feel rough and scratchy like sandpaper, while dogs' tongues are smooth? Cats have tiny "spikes" on their tongues, called **papillae**. The spikes act like brushes to help cats groom themselves. Cats are **solitary** hunters, meaning they hunt alone. They need to stay extra clean so other animals cannot smell them. Cats also use their rough tongues to help them eat.

So why are dogs' tongues smoother than cats' tongues? It may be because the early ancestors of dogs used to hunt in packs, so they did not need to stay as clean as cats. And they use their teeth more than cats do to help them hold and chew food.

**Fun Facts**

1. Dogs have more taste buds on their tongues than cats.
2. Cats can't taste sweet things!
3. Dogs can taste things that are salty, bitter, sweet, and sour.



**MUTTS**

by Patrick McDonnell

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Isabella the  
**RABBIT  
RESCUER**

Isabella was only 12 when she started her very own rabbit rescue. At the time, there were no rescue groups near her that cared for rabbits and other small animals who needed a home. She wanted to change that, so she started Maddilyn Animal Rescue (MAR) from her home.

Isabella wakes up early every day before school to take care of all the rabbits. She feeds them, cleans their areas, and lets them out to play. Sometimes she even has to come home during school to give them medicine.

Isabella says that just like dogs and cats, rabbits make great indoor pets. Like dogs and cats, they need love, care, and attention. But rabbits have their own specific needs for long, healthy, and happy lives. "Before adopting a bunny," she says, "ask your parents if you can volunteer at a local shelter or rescue to learn more."

Do bunnies make good Easter gifts? "I would suggest that most kids should get a stuffed toy bunny instead of a real bunny for Easter," Isabella says, "unless you and your parents have done lots of research and are 100% ready to adopt one. They are adorable, but they are a big responsibility!"



**What do rabbits need to be safe, healthy, and happy?**

**Check the things you *didn't* know bunnies needed!**

**Food:**

- A steady supply of a special type of hay called "Timothy hay"
- Fresh, leafy green vegetables
- Fresh water
- Small pieces of fruit as treats

**Habitat:**

- Litter box with rabbit-safe litter mixed with Timothy hay—they like to eat hay and potty in the same place!
- Chew toys
- Places to hide
- Lots of space to exercise
- Soft bedding like blankets and towels



**BINKY BUNNY**

Do you know what rabbits look like when they're happy? "When rabbits are happy, they do something called binkying," Isabella says. "They run around quickly, jump up in the air, and twist their bodies!" Check out our RedRover Reporters YouTube channel to see what it looks like when a bunny "binkies!"

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RIDDLE RAT!

HOW DO PIGS WRITE SECRET MESSAGES?  
(answer on p. 7)



Willowbrook Farms & Lollypop Farm "Teacup" Pigs



## The truth behind "teacup" pigs

**They're all over the Internet: photos of adorable piglets posed in teacups and on dollhouse furniture. They're called "teacup pigs" and "pocket pigs," which makes it seem like they'll stay tiny forever. But they don't.**

Walter was one of these piglets. "Being sold as a teacup pig, his first family thought he would stay small," said Crystal Porter, president of Willowbrook Farms Animal Sanctuary near Bloomfield, Indiana. "As he grew with proper nutrition, they knew their home would not provide enough space for him." He was 70 pounds when he arrived at the sanctuary. Less than one year later, Walter now weighs 100 pounds. And since pigs aren't full-grown until age five, he's still not done growing!



Crystal believes that Walter is part potbellied, part Juliana pig—breeds that are smaller than the 1,000-pound "commercial" pigs found on farms and raised for meat. When full-grown, potbellied pigs range from 80-180 pounds.

More and more people are buying pigs like Walter, and more and more pigs are ending up at shelters and sanctuaries when they grow larger than expected. Lollypop Farm in Fairport, New York, had 29 pigs last fall, more than farm manager Joanna Dychton has ever seen. She said that about 95% of them were first sold as "teacup," "micro-mini," or Juliana pigs. When "teacup" pigs are sold, people are told they will not grow to more than 50 pounds, but the only way they can stay that small is if people feed them far less food than is healthy. If people feed them a nutritious, healthy diet, they grow to their natural weight, and then they are too big for homes! This is how farms, like Willowbrook and Lollypop, end up having to care for them.

What can one do to give a pig a forever home? "Research, research, research!" says Crystal. "Do not get a pig if you think it will be like having a dog. Pigs can cry. Pigs can smile. They can have bad days and good days. Some pigs are very friendly while others are never in the mood to be around people...but they still require and deserve love."

## Are You Pig-Prepared?

**Potbellied pigs are smaller than pigs raised for meat. If you love pigs and have the right living space, potbellied pigs might be the pet for you! Before doing a search for adoptable potbellied pigs on websites such as Petfinder.com, consider these facts:**

- 🐷 Most towns consider pigs to be livestock or farm animals and don't allow them in apartments or neighborhoods. Your family would need to ask for special permission.
- 🐷 The lifespan of potbellied pigs is 12-15 years. They need special pig-friendly veterinarians and hoof-trimming services.
- 🐷 As herd animals, pigs do best with another pig. If they become lonely or bored, they may destroy things in a home.
- 🐷 Pigs require a large amount of outdoor space to roam, dig, and root, or explore the ground with their snouts. They don't like stairs or slippery floors.
- 🐷 As **prey** animals, animals who are hunted, pigs get nervous around barking dogs and human visitors.



## Pig Pile of Books



**Charlotte's Web** by E.B. White (author) and Garth Williams (illustrator)—After being saved by a girl as a piglet, farm pig Wilbur finds a friend in a spider named Charlotte who fights to keep him alive.

**The Unlikely Story of a Pig in the City** by Jodi Kendal—When Josie's big brother brings home a piglet named Hamlet on Thanksgiving Day, she sets off on a mission to find him a proper home.

**The Adventures of a South Pole Pig: A novel of snow and courage** by Chris Kurtz—Flora leaves the farm for Antarctica to run with sled dogs, showing how all of us can dream big and be more than people expect.

**Love animals and want to learn more?** RedRover has a list of recommended books about animals at [RedRover.org/books](https://www.redrover.org/books).

**PLUS!** Want to bring stories about animals to your whole class? Visit [RedRover.org/Readers](https://www.redrover.org/Readers).



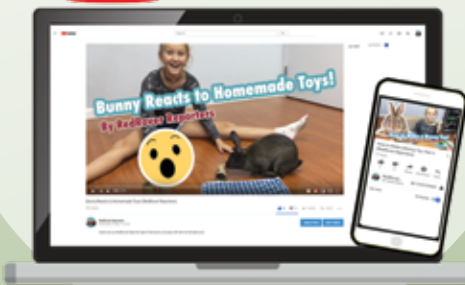


We recycle paper and plastics. Nature recycles leaves and plants! This is called **composting**. When leaves fall from trees and land on the ground, they become mulch that helps protect the soil. Soon, those leaves **decompose**, or break down, giving the soil **nutrients**.

Animals help with composting. Birds and rabbits scratch and dig at the dirt while looking for scraps to eat. Their **scat**, or waste, contains a gas called **nitrogen**, a chemical plants need to grow well or **thrive**. Animals that live in the compost, like worms, help break down the plant matter faster. Healthy soil grows healthy plants! When healthy plants grow, larger animals (including humans) have food to eat. When humans compost food scraps, the cycle can start all over again!

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# Make Your Own COMPOST!

- 1 Find a spot to set up your compost bin. It can get stinky, so choose your spot wisely!
- 2 Gather kitchen scraps for your compost bin: vegetable scraps, fruit peels and scraps, rotten fruit, and eggshells. Do not add meat, oil or milk products!
- 3 Mix your food scraps with leaves, cut grass, dirt, and other plant parts.
- 4 Build your compost bin in layers. Start with the brown stuff like dirt, leaves, or pine needles. Create a layer of leaves about six inches thick.
- 5 Next, add a layer of grass a few inches thick. It helps to mix up the layers a little as you go. Sprinkle in some soil into the bin with a shovel.
- 6 Sprinkle in some water each time you add another layer. You might see some cool compost “critters” like earthworms and millipedes.
- 7 You will know when your compost is ready when it looks like dark soil and smells earthy. Time to mix it in with your garden soil and grow happy plants!

**ANSWER:** THEY USE INVISIBLE OINK.

## CRITTER CLUES

- 1 As a male, I have a greenish head with white stripes.
- 2 I live in wooded swamps, marshes, shallow lakes, and ponds.
- 3 When I walk, my head goes back and forth like a penguin!
- 4 My short, broad wings help me fly through woods, which most other birds who live in water don't do.
- 5 I am a “cavity-nester,” so I build my nests inside sheltered chambers, such as trees near water.
- 6 I eat plants, seeds, nuts, and fruit. When I am young, I also eat insects, snails, tadpoles and fish.

## WHAT AM I?



**Want to grow your own food but don't have the space? See if your town has a community garden or start one at your school!**