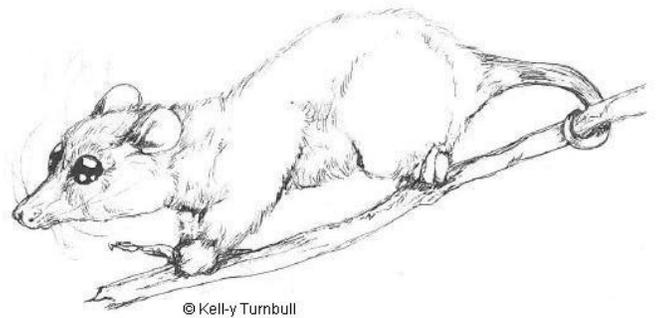


Necessities:

- 20 gal long tank or larger
- Bedding
- Glass Water Tube
- Food dish
- Insectivore Diet
- Meal worms
- Hiding place for sleeping
- Under tank heater
- Branches

Extras:

- Toys
- Extra cage furniture
- Treats



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General:

The Short Tail Opossum (or STO for short) was brought into the United States by an expedition team from the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. in 1978. In 1994, Dr. Naomi Poran and Tony Cueto of Animals Exotic introduced them into the pet market. They are native to Brazil and Chile where they live near human habitats. The locals call them "cachita" and welcome their presence because of their appetite for rodents and insects. They are very clean, curious, and friendly animals. Because of their nature and uniqueness, they make excellent pets. STO's are 4" to 6" full grown. The males are about 25% larger than the females and can weigh three to six ounces. Their fur is grayish brown with a lighter tone underneath. They have a prehensile tail which they use to carry nesting material or to hold onto branches. They have large sensitive ears and very keen hearing. STO's are a marsupial (although they have no pouch) The undeveloped embryonic babies firmly attach to the thirteen exposed nipples after birth. They are sexually mature at 4.5 months with a gestation period of fourteen days. Litter size ranges from two to thirteen babies. When the babies are born, the mother will spend the majority of her time in her nest box and may not come out for days. The babies will stay attached to the nipples for one month. When they are about four weeks old, the babies will start to wander about the nest. When the mother leaves the nest, they will firmly cling to the mothers fur and ride piggyback. They wean at about eight weeks. By nine weeks, the babies should be housed individually. Their lifespan is 4-6 years. They are solitary animals and will fight, possibly killing each other. The breeding and selling of STO's is closely regulated by the USDA. Make sure when purchasing one of these little cuties that you are dealing with a USDA-licensed business or person.

Handling:

When you come by to meet a STO, we will show you how to pick it up. If someone is afraid of picking up an STO we will encourage them to try a different pet. It is sometimes helpful to carry them around in a bonding pouch around your neck so that they get to know your scent and voice. They are very docile and rarely bite unless scared or squeezed. Try to NEVER pick your STO up by its tail. Do not use hand sanitizers before handling your pet.

Exercise:

Exercise is very important. Encourage healthy activity by creating an interesting habitat with branches and climbing toys, a wheel, beds and things that can be used for nesting. Try a Superpet® Igloo and some Carefresh® Crinkles or other things like this that are small animal-safe.

Housing, Heating & Bedding:

We recommend using **at least** a 20H (12wx24lx18h) or larger glass aquarium with a reptile heating pad attached on the underside or on one end during the wintertime in Western Washington State. They like temperatures between 75-85° F with and 50% humidity. During the hot weather in our area we recommend turning off the heat to the cage. We **DO NOT** recommend using large plastic containers as a cage. When you heat these, they release chemicals that can be toxic to animals and are a fire hazard. Aspen® or Carefresh® litter work well as a bedding (NEVER CEDAR or PINE). We also sprinkle about a tablespoon of 20 Mule Team Borax® in the bedding to help prevent mites. The tank should have a locking screen top or a locking slide top. They are escape artists. For this reason we do not recommend wire cages - if a wire is bent they can escape. The cage should be totally cleaned out at least once a week. A 10% solution of bleach and water should be used for cleaning the tank, food dish and water dish (detergents leave residues that can be harmful). STO's are fastidiously clean and generally choose one corner or spot to go potty in. This area should be scooped out daily - or you can litter box train your pet by placing a small animal litter box with kitty litter in its chosen spot. The bedding should be kept clean and dry at all times. Small animal-safe branches (nothing from the yard; those can carry mites and toxins) or climbing toys and nesting areas should be available.

Diet:

STO's can dehydrate easily! Clean fresh water should be available AT ALL TIMES. They will use a glass water drinking tube (NOT ONE WITH METAL BALLS). We carry, use and recommend Hedgehog Select® Diet, which is an insectivore diet. They will also eat a small amount of veggies (a teaspoon per day is more than enough). Be careful not to overdo the veggies or you may constipate your STO. Although we have a prepared food for them, they are insectivores by nature and should get two or three live or freeze-dried mealworms or crickets each day.

Lighting:

STO's are nocturnal and do not require extra lighting. It is important to have some day to night cycle of light to promote good appetite and sleep cycles. Usually the normal lighting in a home is enough. DO NOT set your cage in front of a window. It is drafty and when the sun comes through the window and the cage glass in can burn your STO.

Health and Well/being:

They are a very hardy animal with relatively few known health problems other than getting too cold, dehydration or toxic reactions due to airborne toxins. We use exotic specialist Dr. Karen Obegi at 206-365-1102.

Enjoy your new pet.
If you have any questions, give us a call!