

Bedding & Litter

Some recommendations for bedding and litter, This list is also recommended from other breeders and organizations.

Bedding:

Kaytee Soft & Cozy

Rat Safe Level: 4.5

Cost: \$5.00-\$20.00

Brand: Kaytee

Info and Comments: This can be and has proven to be a good alternative to Harlan's Diamond Soft or the Care-fresh Ultra brands. It is very soft and light, some time causing it to stick to the rats. It comes in basic white(Non-scented), Rose(Scented), Lavender(Scented), Vanilla(Scented), Cinnamon(Scented). This product is rated anywhere from a 4 to a 5 star item. I personally love the Lavender scented, but some scents can cause Myco flare ups.

Diamond Soft Bedding (Harlan's)

Rat Safe Level: 4.5

Cost: \$30.00-\$45.00

Brand: Harlan

Info and Comments: This product is one of the best for dust level. It is expensive, but the bag is very large and can last a long time depending on what and how much you're using it for. I find it lasts longer than the biggest Care-fresh Ultra bag it is also cheaper by weight than Carefresh which is a big benefit.

Aspen Shavings

Rat Safe Level: 3-4

Cost: \$14.00-\$30

Info and Comments: This product is good for use on the bottoms of cages or in litters, it is not recommended for use in tanks or non-ventilated areas. I have been using this product while I've been breeding this is the best at the time due to the cost effectiveness as well as lower dust. It is said to be safe on many websites, and is always better than Pine or Cedar. I would recommend other soft low dust bedding over the aspen because there is much better available. This product can still encourage respiratory irritations even though it's labeled as a "safe" product. There still is a small amount of dust, but there are ways to help decrease the dust by tossing and turning it in a bag then opening it to let some of the dust out (Best done our side). This does vary by brand, I use the Nepco Brand. Please note, it sticks to hammocks, fleece, clothes, floors etc.

Pine and Cedar

Rat Safe Level: 0 Don't Use!

Brands: Any and all Pine!

Info and Comments: Pine will make your rats and or any small animal sick! Do not use this bedding! It leads to respiratory problems, and can cause death.

Carefresh Crinkle Paper – All Colours

Rat Safe Level: 4.5

Cost: \$4.95 (2 OZ)

Brands: Carefresh

Info and Comments:

I have never personally used this product, I would guess it's a good product to use as decoration and or nesting but I wouldn't use this as a base for a cage as it doesn't seem like it would be helpful with peeing and smell.

Fleece

Rat Safe Level: 3-4

Cost: Depends on yard and or location

Brands: Fabric stores, Dollar stores, Target, Walmart etc

Info and Comments: Fleece is the best way to control and eliminate all dust from other beddings, but it holds in smell and does not absorb pee easily. You will most likely be changing it every 1-2 days otherwise the ammonia can also cause respiratory infections. This needs to be washed thoroughly in a washing machine on HOT water to kill all bacteria's, but I would suggest hanging it up to dry vs machine dry.

Recycled Cardboard and Paper

Rat Safe Level: 2-3

Cost: Depends on brand

Brands: Boxo, and or other Brands

Info and Comments: This is great for litter! It's also pretty good with smell, I wouldn't recommend this product as a full out bedding as depending on the brand it can be quite hard on the body's and feet of ratties.

Shredded Newspaper (Food Based Dyes)

Rat Safe Level: 2-3

Cost: Free/recycling

Brands: Any news print

Info and Comments: This can be a lot of work, personally I shred all the paper by my self with my shedder. I use it with nursing mums and or for nesting, and it will need very regular cleaning like the fleece does because it holds in the smell. It is very absorbent, but is very quickly soaked. Be very careful to ensure the dyes used in printing are safe.

Carefresh- Any colour

Rat Safe Level: 3-4

Cost: Depends on Size

Brands: Carefresh

Info and Comments: Care fresh & Care fresh Ultra are often confused, or people do not realize there is a difference. The amount of dust you can wipe of plastic walls in care fresh bag is a pretty fair amount, and is much greater with standard Care fresh the Care Fresh Ultra

Multi-Use:

Aspen Threads

Rat Safe Level: 4-5

Cost: Depends on brand

Brands: Nepco and online stores

Info and Comments: I like to use this in houses, nesting and nursing for moms. It can be manipulated to any shape and often is a good nesting material. I wouldn't T how ever suggest this as a base cover to cages as it can knot and get balled up.

Pelletized Paper (Yesterday's News)

Rat Safe Level: 5

Cost: Depends on Size and Supplier

Brands: N/A

Info and Comments: This product is great to use for litters, but due to the hardness I wouldn't suggest it as a base product. It takes on the pee smell and locks it in, this litter is good for long term use.

Fleece Scraps

Rat Safe Level: 5+

Cost: Depends/extra

Brands: N/A

Info and Comments: This is great for nests, nursing mums, hides and boxes etc. It does get smelly and often is best to just throw it all out after a use, you can wash them like a normal Fleece if you wish. The price isn't much as you buy it when making other items or use in levels, but it is great for any kind of nest making.

Walnut (Crushed Walnut Shells)

Rat Safe Level: 3-4

Cost: Depends on brand

Brands/Supplier: Kaytee, Reptile Supplies etc.

Info and Comments: This product isn't the best for a base and or litter, it does lock in the smell well but it can mold and cause issues with flies and other household bugs. Often many rats rather dig it in then use it as litter, when wet it clumps lightly and then hardens. I would recommend another product.

Carefresh - Litter Plus

Rat Safe Level: 3-4

Cost: Depends on Size

Brands/Supplier: Carefresh

Info and Comments:

This litter works really well in litter pans with a wire top, other wise rats will play and mess with it over using it as litter. I wouldn't use this as a base to the cage as again it is quite hard on the paws and body.

Kitty Litter (non-clumping, non-scented, low dust)

Rat Safe Level: 2-3

Cost: Depends on brand

Brands: Many

Info and Comments: This is a great odor killer, but depending on the brand it can cause issues with the lungs. It also often holds other chemicals not ideal for rats, also the fact it can be very dusty. This litter can cause issues if eaten as well, so I wouldn't really recommend it unless mixed with another litter.

Harlan Corn Cob

Rat Safe Rating: 3-4

Cost: Depends on supplier and size.

Brands: Harlan Teklad

Info and Comments: This product can be used in a base of a cage, but I would recommend changing it often and only use with adult rats. It can be a choking hazard as well as a mold issue, sadly being a natural product it can mold and cause issues with breathing. I wouldn't recommend this but it does work well when cleaned often and managed.

Rabbit Food (Pellets)

Rat Safe Rating: 1-2

Cost: Depends on brands

Brands: Oxbow, Bulkbarn, etc

Info and Comments: I would never use this unless you can't afford the right litter, because it is a natural based food it will and can mold. This will cause breathing issues as well as mold in the air, bacteria will grow and flies will lay eggs. Mind you if cleaned daily I see no issue as to why it wouldn't work, the rats can and may eat it, which I don't like if they are in fact using it. I wouldn't recommend this product.