

# Residents fear for rabbits' well-being

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Staff Writer

Two new residents in the Regan Cr./Delrex Blvd. area have become a cause for concern for some of their neighbours.

The latest additions to the neighbourhood are domestic rabbits— one silver-grey and the other fawn-coloured— that have been spotted nibbling on greenery in several area gardens.

Some residents believe the large pet rabbits have been released by their owner(s) into the wild and they fear they won't be able to survive for long.

Their fears are not unfounded, says Haviva Lush, executive director of Rabbit Rescue, a non-profit Milton-based organization dedicated to finding new homes for domestic rabbits that have been abused, abandoned or neglected.

"It's an urgent situation for sure. They can't survive very long (in the wild), especially in the winter," said Lush. "They're genetically different than wild rabbits. They're a different species. They can't find food. Once it starts to snow their food source will be covered. They're scared, and they're prey."

Lush said each year the organization rescues approximately 300 rabbits, and 95 per cent of those animals have been released by their owners. She said in all her experience rescuing rabbits, she hasn't seen a case yet where a rabbit found outdoors was actually "lost," and the owner came forward to claim it.

"It's completely irresponsible, and horribly cruel," said Lush.

Jane Burrows, an area resident, is worried about the rabbits' well-being.

She said she and her husband first noticed the fawn-coloured rabbit last Tuesday, and on Wednesday the silver/grey one appeared.

"They traveled up and down the street," said Burrows.

She said the pair, which seem to travel together, has shown up several times since and other neighbours have also seen them.

They have been eating greenery and sunflower seeds Burrows had out for



Neighbours in the Regan Crescent/Delrex Boulevard area of Georgetown are concerned about the well-being of two new residents— a pair of domestic rabbits. Experts say the rabbits were likely abandoned and will die if not captured soon.

Top: Photo by Ted Brown  
Left: Photo courtesy Carolyn MacColl

chipmunks. Brian Bush, another area resident, has also been feeding the rabbits.

Burrows is disgusted that someone has likely abandoned the rabbits.

"It's just sad that people would do that to a pet," said Burrows.

Burrows' daughter, Carolyn MacColl, is incensed.

"These rabbits are not skittish to humans as a wild one would be," said MacColl. "Obviously, some human, and I use this term loosely, has released these beautiful naïve animals into the wild. The reason I'm assuming this is we haven't seen any 'Lost' posters in the Regan Cr./Delrex Blvd. area, and there's been nothing in the paper."

She said she hopes that the "responsible adults" who released the rabbits haven't done this to "make room in the household for a Christmas present— a new puppy or kitten."

Burrows ran a classified Lost &

Found ad about the rabbits in the Tuesday edition of *The Independent & Free Press*, but has had no response. She has also called several animal shelters and humane societies but had no luck finding one that would rescue the rabbits.

"(Someone at a shelter) said they were sorry but they were loaded with cats and didn't have room for that type of animal," said Burrows.

Lush said Rabbit Rescue can rescue the rabbits and encourages residents in the area to feed the rabbits, especially bananas, to gain their trust so volunteers with the organization and neighbours in the area can stage a rabbit "round-up."

She said, unfortunately they don't currently have room to keep the rabbits but they would try to place them in a shelter or find a foster family for them.

To contact Rabbit Rescue, call 905-875-4343 or [www.rabbitrescue.ca](http://www.rabbitrescue.ca)

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