

These animals pass the winter in a torpid state, and are the only ones of Europe which have pouches in their cheeks. They avoid extremes, and are not to be found either in very warm or very cold countries. As he feeds upon grain, and dwells under the earth, it is necessary for the construction of his habitation that the soil should neither be hard, sandy, nor marshy, but one that is easily penetrated, and yet so firm as not to crumble down; and it is for this reason that the hamsters are more numerous in Thuringia than in any other place, where also they have the equally great advantage of procuring all kinds of grain with ease, it being an abundant article in that country.

The hamsters come in season about the end of April, when the males seek out the females, who always have separate habitations, but do not remain with them above a few days. If two males meet in the same hole they instantly attack each other, and never give over until one has laid the other dead at his feet. The victor of course takes possession of the female, and during their amours they lay aside that ferocity with which at other times they constantly persecute each other; nay, they will at this time act for their mutual defence,
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