

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



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EXTENSION
OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For the week of
Oct. 5, 2008

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Notes: How fast does a hamster run? About 1.8 miles per hour, the study reported. Compare that to the average walking speed of a person: about 3 miles per hour. The study appeared in the *Journal of Translation Medicine* in 2006. Title: "Decreased Wheel-running Activity in Hamsters Post Myocardial Infarction." Find it at <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1769401>. The five most common pet hamster breeds, according to the Web site HamsterHideout.com, are (from bigger to smaller) the Syrian, the Campbell Russian, the Chinese, the Winter White Russian (also called the Siberian) and the Roborovski.

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Q. Dear Twig: My pet hamster runs in her wheel all the time. OK, not all the time, but a lot. At least at night. How far do you think she runs?

A. "Eek, eek, eek. Eek, eek, eek." I hear that noise when I visit the home of my human friend Miss McGillicuddy. "Eek, eek, eek. Eek, eek, eek." And on and on and on and on.

What is it?

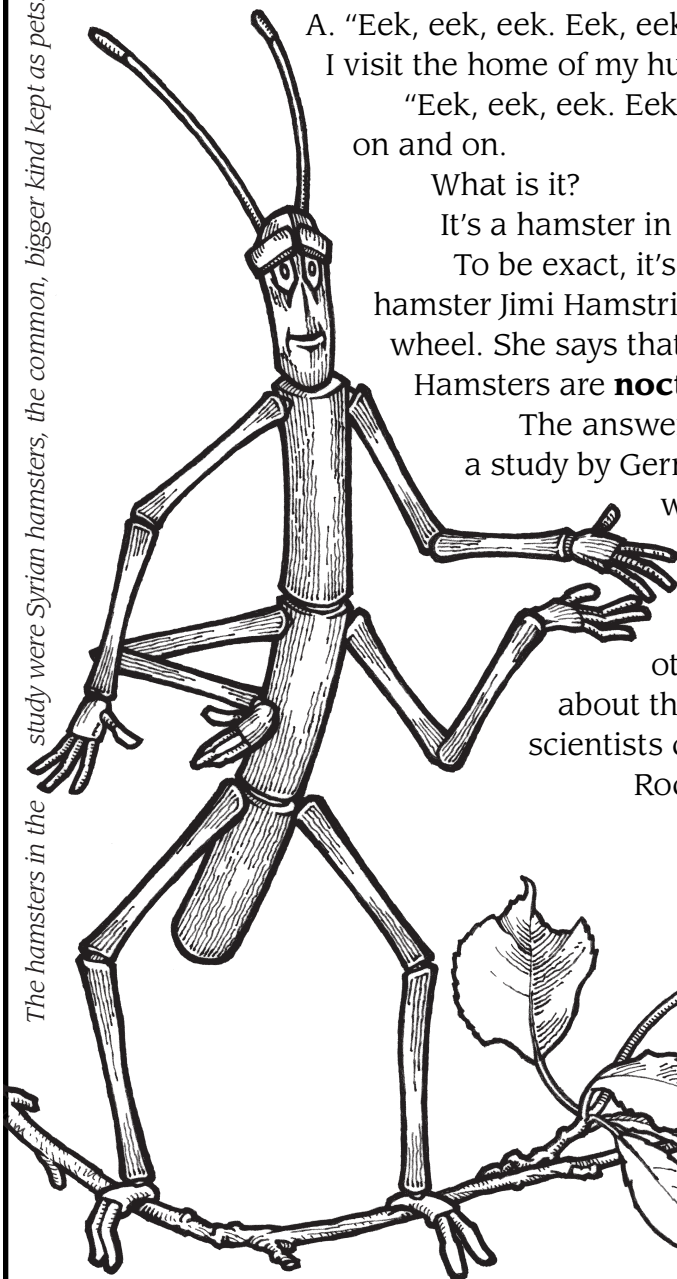
It's a hamster in an exercise wheel is what it is. To be exact, it's Miss McGillicuddy's pet hamster Jimi Hamstrix in his squeaky metal exercise wheel. She says that he runs in it most of the night. Hamsters are **nocturnal**: active at night.

The answer to your question comes from a study by German scientists. A healthy young wheel-jogging hamster, they found, runs **about 8 miles a night**. Running from one end of a soccer field to the other end 130 times would equal about the same distance. Eek! The scientists called that "amazing." I agree. Rock on, Jimi! Roll on. Both.

Round and round,

Twig

The hamsters in the study were Syrian hamsters, the common, bigger kind kept as pets.



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).