

GREENFOOD IDEAS: WHAT'S GOOD TO FEED

This list isn't exhaustive - there's a longer list on the RWF website

VEGETABLES:

ASPARAGUS
BABY SWEETCORN
BEETROOT (not the leafy tops)
BROCCOLI
BRUSSEL SPROUTS
CABBAGE
CARROTS AND TOPS - NOT MANY, CARROTS ARE HIGH IN SUGARS
CAULIFLOWER
CELERIAC
CELERY
CHICORY
COURGETTE
CUCUMBER
CURLY KALE
FENNEL
GREEN BEANS
PARSNIP
PEAS (inc. leaves & pods)
PEPPERS
PUMPKIN, SWEDE, TURNIP & SQUASH
RADISH TOPS
ROCKET
ROMAINE LETTUCE (NOT ICEBERG OR OTHER LIGHT COLOURED LEAVED VARIETIES)
SPINACH
SPRING GREENS
WATERCRESS
HERBS (POWERFUL TASTES MAY TAKE SOME GETTING USED TO!)
BASIL
CORIANDER
DILL
MINT
PARSLEY
OREGANO
ROSEMARY
FRUITS (max 2 tablespoons per day)
APPLE
APRICOT

BANANA
BLACKBERRIES (inc. leaves)
BLUEBERRIES
CHERRIES
GRAPES
KIWI FRUIT
MANGO
MELON
NECTARINES
ORANGES (not the peel)
PAPAYA
PEACHES
PEARS
PINEAPPLE
PLUMS
RASPBERRIES (inc. leaves)
STRAWBERRIES (inc. leaves)
TOMATOES (not the leaves)
WILD GARDEN HERBS/WEEDS/FLOWERS:
BORAGE
CALENDULA
CAMOMILE
CHICKWEED (ASTRINGENT)
CLOVER (leaves and flowers)
COLTSFOOT
COMFREY
DANDELION (DIURETIC PROPERTIES)
GOOSEGRASS (CLEAVERS) but may stick to coat!
LAVENDER
MALLOW
NETTLE
NASTURTIUM (LEAVES AND FLOWERS)
SHEPHERD'S PURSE
SOW THISTLE
PLANTAIN
YARROW



For further information:

- The RWF Guide To Feeding your pet rabbits (leaflet)
- RWF Website - Information section
- Rabbit Nutrition (book), Virginia Richardson, Coney Press 1999 - available from RWA, PO Box 603, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 5WL or via the online shop at www.rabbitwelfare.co.uk/catalog/

This leaflet is brought to you by the Rabbit Welfare Fund - the charitable wing of the Rabbit Welfare Association.

If you love rabbits, please consider supporting the Rabbit Welfare Fund. You can make a donation, or you may like to join the RWA. As well as fund-raising activities, most RWA members kindly make a small donation to the RWF in addition to their annual RWA membership fee. RWA members receive a fabulous quarterly magazine packed with health, behaviour and care advice to help you to build a wonderful relationship with your bunny - whether she/he lives indoors or out.

To contact the RWA/Rabbit Welfare Fund:

Ring the RWA National Helpline on 0844 324 6090

Write to us at PO Box 603, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 5WL.

Log onto our websites

<http://www.rabbitwelfare.co.uk>

<http://www.rabbitwelfarefund.co.uk>

Contact the National Helpline to order bulk supplies of leaflets or send SAE for single copies.



Rabbit Welfare Fund
Write to us at PO Box 603,
Horsham, West Sussex RH13 5WL.
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GOING GREEN



healthy eating for your rabbit



The best way to feed a pet rabbit is to mimic the diet of his wild cousins - rabbits weren't designed to eat rabbit mix! This leaflet explains the benefits of a "hay & greens" diet.

If your rabbit already eats lots of grass or hay, you've taken a major step to help him (or her!) enjoy a long, healthy life. But wild rabbits eat many other plants - not just grass. Pet rabbits (and their digestive system) really benefit from fresh greens every day.

SAFETY POINT:

Never make sudden changes to your rabbit's diet. Introduce new foods gradually, over at least two weeks. When first trying a new green food, give a very small portion - e.g. a single leaf. Make sure your bunny tolerates this before adding other new foods. If your rabbit has never eaten greens, switching to a hay & greens diet may take a couple of months.

THE HAY & GREENS DIET: WHAT IS IT?

The bulk of your rabbit's diet should be made up of grass. This can be fresh (if your rabbit has a lawn run), kiln-dried grass, or hay.

Next, add in greenfoods and vegetables. Some rabbits happily eat a heap of greens half their size every day; other bunnies do better with less. To work out what suits your bunny, check his droppings. You're aiming for evenly sized, dark, plump, "rabbit raisins"!

Finally, you can add small quantities of commercially produced rabbit food as a "feed balancer" to ensure your rabbit isn't missing out on any vitamins or minerals, and to check your rabbit's appetite!

HOW TO USE SHOP-BOUGHT RABBIT FOOD

- Very little commercial food is needed with the hay & greens diet. An egg-cupful daily for a dwarf rabbit, or a single handful for an average sized bunny, is adequate.
- Choose a quality branded product - preferably in sealed bags with a sell-by date.
- With muesli-style rabbit mixes, don't let your rabbit pick out its favourite ingredients and reject the rest. Feed less, or switch to a pelleted or extruded product. These are also advisable if you have two or more rabbits living together.

WHAT GREENS TO FEED?

A multitude of plants are safe for rabbits to eat - it's up to you whether you get them from the hedgerow or the supermarket! Either way, aim to feed 5 or 6 different greens/vegetables each day. There's a list of safe plants & vegetables on the back panel of this leaflet. Fruits are counted as treats, as they are generally high in sugars. Your bunny may well enjoy a grape, or a slice of apple, but he shouldn't eat more than 1-2 tablespoons of fruit per day.

SAFETY POINTS:

- If you're feeding wild plants, make sure you can reliably identify them - you don't want to poison your bunny!
- Wash all greens thoroughly, and keep your rabbit's VHD & myxomatosis vaccinations up to date. If collecting wild plants, avoid areas frequented by dogs or sprayed with pesticides.
- Never feed lawn clippings to rabbits - they ferment very quickly and may be harmful.

BABY BUNNIES: HANDLE WITH CARE!

Baby bunnies are very vulnerable to digestive upsets and many die from sudden changes of diet on top of the stress of weaning and changing home. This is why it's advisable to obtain baby rabbits directly from reputable breeders. To keep your new pet safe, consider what your baby rabbit has been weaned on to.

- If your bunny came directly from the breeder and you know that s/he was weaned onto a mixed diet including greens and vegetables, it's fine to continue.
- If you bought your bunny in a pet shop (or from a breeder who didn't feed fresh greens & vegetables) stick to whatever it was fed in the shop for the first few weeks, plus top quality hay.

Young rabbits grow very rapidly, and do benefit from the extra energy and nutrients in commercial rabbit foods until they stop growing. If you want to switch your youngster onto one of the special "Junior" products available, remember to do it gradually, over at least two weeks.

If your baby bunny wasn't eating fresh greens before you bought him, wait until he's fully settled in before offering tiny amounts of green food or vegetables (e.g. a slice of carrot; a palm-sized piece of cabbage leaf). Be very cautious, especially with babies under 12 weeks old: halt the process if there are any signs of diarrhoea. Gradually increase the amount of greens over the next few months. By the time your bunny is 6-7 months old, he should be eating the hay & greens diet, but with some extra Junior commercial food.

POISONOUS PLANTS

Although many plants are reputedly toxic to rabbits, reports of poisoned bunnies are extremely rare. If your rabbit takes a bite or two of a poisonous plant, he's unlikely to come to harm. However, if you think your rabbit is ill you must seek veterinary advice immediately.

This list of poisonous plants isn't definitive, isn't exhaustive, and we certainly don't intend to test it out... it's here to give you some idea of the plants to keep your bunny away from.

ALL PLANTS THAT GROW FROM BULBS

AMARYLLIS	HEMLOCK
ARUM LILY (CUCKOO POINT)	HENBANE
BINDWEED	LILY OF THE VALLEY
BRACKEN	LUPIN
BRYONY	LABURNUM
BUTTERCUP (small quantities dried within hay is OK)	MOST EVERGREENS
CONVOLVULUS (BINDWEED)	OAK LEAVES
DEADLY NIGHTSHADE (BELLADONNA)	POPPIES
DELPHINIUM (LARKSPUR)	POTATO TOPS
ELDER	PRIVET
FOOLS PARSLEY	RAGWORT
FOXGLOVE	RHUBARB LEAVES
HELLEBORES (CHRISTMAS ROSE)	SCARLET RUNNER
	TOADFLAX
	WOODY NIGHTSHADE
	YEW

