



Please Don't Feed The Deer!



Feeding deer can be harmful to them and dangerous for you.

You care about the deer you watch from your home. That's natural. Care enough to let them live naturally.

This is especially true with deer. Though deer share many traits with other hooved animals, their digestive system is a bit different. Their rumen, or first "stomach," is small, and food passes through their digestive system slowly. To thrive, deer must eat only the most easily digested and nutrient-rich plant parts.

Watch deer as they browse, and you will see them choosing such nutritious foods as plant buds, green twigs and lush flowering plants. In winter habitat, deer browse sagebrush, mountain mahogany, and the buds of other shrubs. Green flowering plants are favored when they are available. In neighborhoods, fruits such as crabapples add a tasty supplement, but won't sustain a deer. Most other foods, unless scientifically formulated, will cause more harm than good.

Elk, on the other hand, can eat large quantities of less nutritious plant material, such as hay; roughage will pass through their system quickly, and they will obtain the nutrients they need.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife feeds big game only when winter conditions are extreme, with an expected loss of 30% of the adult female population, and only with specially formulated food.

These are several good reasons for the public not to feed any wild animal. The best thing people can do for wildlife is to ensure access to habitat where they can find their natural diet.

Thanks for your cooperation!

- ▶ **Deer can die if fed the wrong food. Hay, pet food, and human foods are all harmful.**
- ▶ **Fed deer can become demanding and dangerous.**
- ▶ **Feeding deer attracts mountain lions to your property.**
- ▶ **Feeding deer can concentrate them in an area and lead to the spread of disease.**
- ▶ **Feeding big game is unlawful.**

For more information or to report suspected feeding, contact our office:

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