



Rabbit Foods...What to Feed Them and What to Avoid

Rabbits love their food and enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables as a part of a balanced diet. The main part of a rabbit's diet should be unlimited amounts of fresh hay (preferably Timothy or Meadow Hay), grass and plenty of clean, fresh water available at all times.

When introducing any new food, always do so slowly over a few weeks to avoid digestive upsets. *Rabbits, like humans are all different and as such some may be unable to tolerate certain foods.* Only give a small amount and wait for 24 hours, if your rabbit produces soft poo, withdraw the food and tray with something else after everything has settled back to normal. Allow 5-7 days before making any other additions. *Always wash food first and don't feed plants from the roadside or that contain pesticides.*

The first rule of feeding bunnies and their delicate tummies is: *if in doubt-don't let them eat it!* Rabbits have strong taste buds and will try anything, even if it is poisonous. It is up to you to protect them!

Which Vegetables Can Rabbits Eat?

A good guideline is to feed a minimum of 1 cup of vegetables for each 4 pounds of body weight per day.

- Artichoke Leaves
- Asparagus
- Baby Sweet Corns (but not full size ones)
- Beetroot (care with leafy tops as have high levels of oxalic acid)
- Broccoli (and its leaves, including purple sprouting varieties)
- Brussel Sprouts (leaves and sprouts)
- Cabbage (can sometimes cause digestive upset)
- Carrots (and carrot tops, not the roots as they are high in sugars)
- Cauliflower (and the leaves)
- Celery Leaves
- Chicory
- Cucumber
- Curly Kale
- Fennel

- Green Beans
- Kohl Rabi
- Peas (including the leaves and pods)
- Peppers (red, green and yellow)
- Pumpkin
- Radish Tops
- Romaine Lettuce
- Spinach (only occasionally)
- Spring Greens
- Squash (eg. Butternut)
- Swede
- Turnip (only occasionally)
- Watercress

Which Fruits Can Rabbits Eat?

Fruits should be fed in moderation due to the sugar content (up to two tablespoons worth per day). Do not feed the pits, stones or plants of fruits unless otherwise stated, as most of the time they are poisonous! Rabbits love sugary fruit and will eat too much of it, which is bad for them. Therefore, it's up to you to limit it!

- Apple (not the pits-they are poisonous)
- Apricot
- Banana (high in potassium)
- Blackberries (and leaves-excellent astringent properties)
- Blueberries
- Cherries (not the pits and plant-they contain cyanide and therefore are poisonous)
- Grapes
- Kiwi Fruit
- Mango
- Melon
- Nectarines
- Oranges (not the peel)
- Papaya
- Peaches
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Raspberries (and leaves-excellent astringent properties)
- Strawberries (and leaves)
- Tomatoes (not the leaves)

Which Herbs Can Rabbits Eat?

They can taste very strong, so offer a little to start with to get your rabbits used to these herbs.

- Basil
- Coriander
- Dill
- Mint (peppermint)
- Parsley
- Oregano
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Thyme

Which Wild Garden Herbs, Weeds and Flowers Can Rabbits Eat?

Double-check which plants are in your garden before letting your rabbits loose!

- Borage
- Calendula
- Camomile
- Chickweed (astringent)
- Clover (leaves and flowers)
- Coltsfoot
- Comfrey
- Dandelion (diuretic properties)
- Goosegrass (cleavers-may stick to coat)
- Lavender
- Mallow
- Nettle
- Nasturtium (leaves and flowers)
- Shepherd's Purse
- Sow Thistle
- Plantain

Foods to Avoid

Avoid giving your rabbits any "human" food or treats such as bread, rice, potatoes, biscuits, chocolate, sweets, and crisps and so on. Rabbits have a sweet tooth and will readily take this food from you, but it is very bad for them and their sensitive digestive systems. Contrary to popular belief, rabbits shouldn't be given lettuce as it give them diarrhea, and carrots are too high in sugar, but can be given every so often as treats. A lot of shop-bought "rabbit treats" have added

sugar and dairy in the, which they shouldn't be eating or are too high on carbohydrates. Try sticking to the natural ranges and check labels.

Poisonous Plants to Avoid

If you're feeding wild plants or your rabbit has access to a garden, make sure you can reliably identify the plants-you don't want to poison your rabbits! The list of poisonous plants is taken from the RWAf Guide: *Going Green-Healthy Eating for your Rabbit*. It does not list all poisonous plants, so if a plant does not featuring this list, it doesn't mean it is safe to eat. If you think your rabbit is ill you must seek veterinary advice immediately.

- All plants that grow from bulbs
- Amaryllis
- Arum Lily (cuckoo point)
- Bindweed
- Bracken
- Bryony
- Buttercup (small quantities dried within hay is ok)
- Convolvulus (bindweed)
- Deadly Nightshade (belladonna)
- Delphinium (larkspur)
- Elder
- Fools Parsley
- Foxglove
- Hellebores (Christmas Rose)
- Hemlock
- Henbane
- Lily of the Valley
- Lupin
- Laburnum
- Most Evergreens
- Oak Leaves
- Poppies
- Potato Tops
- Privet
- Ragwort
- Rhubarb Leaves
- Scarlet Runner Toad Flax
- Woody Nightshade
- Yew

Source: *Rabbit Foods...What to feed Them and What to Avoid*