

FEEDING YOUR DWARF RABBIT

Dwarf rabbits need to eat and if you want them healthy and happy, you need to feed them well. Not once have we seen people underfeeding their dwarf rabbits but sadly we have seen dwarf rabbits which were overfed.

What to Feed

Dwarf rabbits can be fed pellets as a standard everyday meal and once in a while you can give them cabbage or corn on the cob with the leaves on but this is as a treat (it's probably like rabbit pudding). The people that make pellets take a bit of time and effort into getting the right blend of fibre and protein. Pellets can be boring I guess so that is where the vegetables come in. Here are some vegetables to try:

Cabbage; carrots (orangey bottoms and green leaves); beet root; spinach (not so popular) and on occasion some fresh apples. Yes we have seen the books that say to feed raw vegetables daily but if you live in a city, finding these every day, everywhere is not easy.

Watch out for fancy rabbit food! You will get the basic pellets, and then there are the fancy foods. Fancy ingredients we have seen are dried veggies, dried fruit, dried coconut, corn flakes and even popcorn. Yes, caramelised popcorn as well. There is a move towards sugar being included in diets so watch for this.

How Often

Dwarf rabbits can be fed once a day in the late afternoon or evening. They are nocturnal so eat through the dark hours. We have experimented and think they eat a quarter of their food during the day and most during the evening.

We feed between 4pm and 6pm every day.

There are some people who prefer to feed in the morning and some who feed half in the morning and half in the evening. Whatever you prefer could work as long as you do not underfeed your dwarf rabbit. The guideline is 1/12th of their body weight.

What you must not give your dwarfie

This list is from our experience. We have met people who do feed their rabbits the things I write about here but why would you if there are hundreds of choices in other food.

- Lettuce; banana; dried fruit that was sulphurised or sugar coated; anything with table sugar or made with table sugar.

Problems with eating

The big problems with eating is with wet food and feeding the wrong food.

- Wet food gets mouldy very quickly. Sometimes mould can grow in one night on wet food. Change wet food immediately. We put the food in the 'house' part of the cage.
- Wet grass and straw also makes rabbits sick. Wet straw we think has a bacteria that grows on it and if it makes it to the rabbits tummy, there will be problems.
- The wrong food is things that make gas in your rabbits tummy, like long-life lettuce.

The Secret in the Water

When we feed our rabbits we give them fresh water every day. If a dwarf rabbit, and probably most small mammals, do not have fresh water, they will stop eating, even if you give them fresh food. Rabbits stop eating if there is no water.