#### 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.



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Healthy eating Lft V1. 31.10.06

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

(CHRISTMAS ROSE)