

Please Don't Feed the Deer

Here's Why...

- Supplemental feeding is not necessary for deer. They survive well on natural foods. Supplemental feeding can result in enterotaxaemia, a fatal disease commonly called grain overload.
- Deer do not naturally feed in close contact with each other (like at a deer feeding station). It increases the likelihood of disease and parasite (e.g., chronic wasting disease (CWD) or mange) transmission from one deer to another. Though CWD is not known to have passed to humans or domestic animals, experts are very concerned about both possibilities and have received over \$1.5 million in funding to study the problem.
- Deer that congregate in unnaturally high numbers tend to damage privately owned plant life and retard new forest growth by eating the buds of young trees. The deer you're feeding may eat your neighbor's trees, gardens, flowers & shrubs.
- Feeding deer = Tame Deer. A tame deer's inherent wildness is compromised, which decreases society's appreciation and tolerance of deer.
- Too many deer can over-browse their habitat, making them vulnerable to mass starvation. Supplemental feeding interrupts natural deer migrations to wintering areas. Individual deer may die in severe winters, but populations will recover.
- Feeding often lures deer to areas where hunting is not allowed. Wildlife agencies rely on regulated hunting to control deer populations.
- Supplemental feeding may not help the deer you think need food. The strongest deer usually eat first at a feeder and chase away younger, older and weaker deer. If a lot of food is provided, older and weaker deer may survive, which artificially inflates local populations even further and above what the available natural habitat can support.
- Deer feeding can create a hazard by drawing deer across roadways and away from their natural feeding and bedding areas. Nationally, ~29,000 people are injured and at least 150 people die from deer-vehicle collisions annually.
- Deer are adapted to winter. They have insulating hollow hair, their metabolism slows down, they seek winter conifer cover, and they live on browse and body fat reserves. They can (and do) survive winter without supplemental feeding.
- See: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/wildlife/research/health/feeding/deer.html>
<https://m.startribune.com/scientists-increasingly-worried-that-chronic-wasting-disease-could-jump-from-deer-to-humans/600344297/?clmob=y&c=n&clmob=y&c=n>