

## **Did you know?**

**It is harmful to deer for humans to feed them.**

## **Why?**

1. Feeding deer can contribute to deer health problems. Deer normally forage alone or in small groups, spreading out to obtain foods which are usually spread across the landscape. Artificial feeding sites attract many deer to one spot. Contagious diseases such as [Chronic Wasting Disease \(CWD\)](#), distemper, and rabies can be spread through close contact, conflicts over food, and contaminated soil or feed.
2. Foods humans often feed deer may cause health issues or even death. Deer can suffer from a condition known as Rumen Acidosis when they eat large amounts of easily digestible carbohydrates, such as corn, wheat, barley, and even apples. When deer eat a lot of carbohydrates, this can cause an increase in the amount of certain types of bacteria in their digestive systems, which can be fatal to deer. Feeding can also cause dehydration and damage to the stomach lining, preventing absorption of nutrients, ultimately causing death.
3. Feeding deer changes their natural behavior. Deer that are fed by humans often lose their natural fear of people. They are more likely to approach people, and may move around more to visit sites where they are likely to be fed. They are more likely to be involved in vehicle collisions or to cause damage to property. In winter, feeding may lure deer out of their natural refuges and cause them to expend extra energy, using up their fat reserves. This can cause deer to lose body condition, and in some cases, to die. Finally, deer that are fed may become aggressive toward people.
4. Over time, feeding deer can lead to unnaturally high populations, causing substantial damage to the natural environment.

It is illegal in the State of New York to feed deer.

Learn more about feeding deer and its impacts here: <https://sites.google.com/view/west-seneca-deer-faqs/home/feeding-deer>

## **Deer like to eat from my bird feeders. Can I still feed the birds?**

Feeding the birds is a legal and enjoyable way to experience nature in your backyard. However, bird feeders can be an attractive source of food for deer as well. Eating bird seed can lead to serious health issues for deer.

## **Tips to make your bird feeders deer safe**

- Use feeders that make it hard for deer to access the food.

- Use feeds that birds enjoy, but deer do not prefer. These include thistle seed, suet, and hummingbird nectar.
- Only put out as much food as the birds will eat in a day.
- Place feeders at least 6 feet off the ground.
- Place feeders close to the windows of your home.
- If you have a dog, place the feeders in the area where the dog spends the most time.
- Place a fence around your.
- Keep the area under your feeders clean!

Learn more about safely feeding birds here: <https://sites.google.com/view/west-seneca-deer-faqs/home/bird-feeders-and-deer>

Learn more about West Seneca's Deer Management Plan here:  
<http://www.westseneca.net/government/deer-task-force#gsc.tab=0>