

Rabbit Food

<http://www.homesteadingtoday.com/livestock-forums/rabbits/377916-homemade-rabbit-feed.html>

If you're looking for fast growing with meat rabbits...pellets has been shown to be the best nutrition for the fastest growth. so....

During the growing season, you can gather all kinds of stuff for your rabbits. Dandelion greens are spectacular nutrition, mulberry (leaves and branches), plantain, grape leaves...so many things that we normally mow/weed out/throw away are great for rabbits. check out the sticky in this forum for natural feeding.

If you have a source of good alfalfa hay, you can easily cut costs by basing your feed on the hay, adding a handful of wheat/oats/barley and some greens. You'll need a mineral block/wheel for the rabbits, as well...to give them the needed salts and minerals.

It's fairly time consuming, tho...depending on how many rabbits you're feeding

A good compromise: timothy/alfalfa or grass/alfalfa mix hay, and pellets. One day they get pellets, the next they get hay. Balance it as you watch what they eat and how they grow. One of my mentors does a 3 day rotation: she gives them all the hay they can eat on day 1; removes the hay and then all the greens/grasses/weeds they can eat on day 2; removes the greens and all the pellets they can eat on day 3. She has super healthy rabbits, ..both angoras and meat mutts. They grow fast, shiny, and healthy.

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I feed my rabbits free choice alfalfa/grass hay, plus some grain (wheat, oats, barley - about 1/4 cup daily for bucks or dry does, more for nursing does and fryers) and as many free gathered greens as the season allows. There is a ton of information in the sticky posts at the top - safe plants list, long thread on natural feeding etc.

Ann is perfectly correct that fryers grow far faster on pellets. Mine take about 14-16 weeks to reach butchering weight instead of 10-12 weeks on pellets and it requires more thought and more work. But it is cheaper overall and more in keeping with the desire of self-sufficiency. And the flavour of the meat is much nicer.

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Mini Pumpkins

Build a couple trellis's and plant mini pumpkins to climb them. Really pretty, don't need to put a sling under each pumpkin growing on the vine, really prolific and a decent winter keeper. Natural wormer in pumpkin seeds. Once ripe and dried, you can store in milk crates/whatever and give each bunny one whenever you want.

Big pumpkins are great too, but a pain in the butt to take a hatchet too all the time. Or you could just put a pumpkin in each cage and replace as needed. My buns get pumpkin on an almost daily basis.

Also great for chickens too- they have no problem devouring a whole pumpkin.

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There is also....garden waste.

Corn leaves, carrot tops, radish tops, etc., etc. (Be careful, no tomato plants!) will provide variety and trace nutrients. Also, garden stuff that won't make it into the house...the peppers that were mostly eaten by caterpillars, the melons that the pill pugs disfigured horribly, lettuce that bolted and squash munched

by what-have-you can all go to your critters.

Even that patch of wheat that a herd of something laid in last night need not go to waste...just cut the area that got bent and feed it to the bunnies...immature wheat berries are VERY sweet.

ETA: Just about anything that you have ever cursed, swore at, and yanked your hair from your head over your local cottontails sneaking into your garden and devouring is acceptable to feed to your domestic bun-buns when you get a nice bumper crop.

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