



A Brief Introduction

The City of Mississauga has a healthy population of deer that live and travel within the City's ravines and wooded areas. They can have a home range of several hundred acres depending on the season, sex of the deer, and the quality of its habitat.

Deer are most active at dusk and dawn. Babies are born in the late spring and the breeding season or "rut" runs through the fall. In the summer months deer build up fat reserves for winter by consuming as much as 4 kg of green plant material daily.

In the winter deer will "yard up", that is they will group together in larger units in order to stay warm and protected. They tend to stay near food and water sources eliminating

the need to expel unnecessary energy. Deer are very strong animals. They can swim for long distances, swimming at 10-13 mph for a distance of 5 miles or more. In addition to being excellent swimmers, deer run at speeds of up to 50km per hour and can jump as high as 3 metres.

Deer are majestic and beautiful animals that many people enjoy watching and viewing these animals from afar is highly encouraged. Feeding the deer, however, is not only unnecessary it is potentially harmful to both deer and humans.

Help keep our deer population safe and healthy.

For more information, contact Mississauga Animal Services at 905-896-5858 or mypet.info@mississauga.ca.

Why Feeding Deer Can Hurt Them

Damage to Habitat

Feeding of deer creates large populations that can overburden the natural habitat. Bucks use their antlers to rub against trees to mark territory with their scent. As a result of having too many deer in one area, trees can be left with little or no bark and may die.

Spread of Disease to Deer

Feeding deer results in higher concentrations of deer living closely together which increases the potential spread of communicable diseases such as Tuberculosis and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) both of which are highly contagious and can wipe out deer populations.

Spread of Disease to Humans

Deer ticks can carry Lyme disease. Lyme disease is transferrable to humans if they are bitten by a tick. The ticks live on the deer and in the vegetation where deer congregate and ticks can easily go undetected on human skin.

Illness and Digestive Problems

A deer's digestive system naturally adapts to foods that are available in the winter months known as "woody browse". Feeding deer apples, carrots, or corn interrupts their natural digestive processes and can lead to digestive problems and even death.

Malnutrition and Starvation

Deer that are being fed an unnatural diet may suffer malnutrition as they are not consuming the natural

nutrients to stay healthy. Deer that become dependent on an artificial food source will also lose their ability to forage and may starve if the food source is of poor quality or discontinued.

Bullying

You may think that feeding the herd means all the deer receive a healthy share of the food. Dominant deer will fight over feeding grounds causing physical harm to themselves and other deer. These dominant deer will force out the smaller and weaker animals which will have a difficult time returning to a natural diet.

Predation and Exposure

Deer that are being fed are an easy target for predators and exposure to bad weather as they continually "hang out" in one location rather than moving around naturally or seeking cover.

Motor Vehicle Collisions

Deer that have been feed by humans lose their natural fear and view people as a food source and not a predator which may cause them to approach humans or get pushy/dangerous in their search for food. They will also gravitate to populated areas, crossing busy roadways and increasing the risk of motor vehicle collisions, a hazard for both deer and humans.