

be considered in terms of availability in a particular area at a specific time. For example, in one study, deer preferred natural vegetation over a nutritionally complete deer pellet ration in spring when new leaves emerged.

Now when you look at the landscape, ask yourself, is this a deer's 4-star buffet or a poorly stocked soup kitchen trying desperately to feed the masses?

\*For more information about deer management visit [www.pgc.state.pa.us](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us) and click the *Deer Program* Quick Click in the right column.



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# Just Because It's GREEN, Doesn't Mean It's FOOD

The Whitetail Buffet



[www.pgc.state.pa.us](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us)

Like all other animals, deer have certain living requirements essential to their existence; food for nourishment and

cover for protection are the two most important.

The importance of food to deer is beyond question; deer must eat to survive. How well they live depends on the quality, quantity, and availability of food.

*Calories per pound for various plants eaten by deer.*

<b>Species</b>	<b>Calories per pound</b>
Acorns	2,300
Hemlock foliage	2,300
Elderberry foliage	2,150
Pin cherry	2,150
Hobblebush twigs	2,100
Maple twigs	2,100
Yellow birch foliage	2,100
Striped maple foliage	2,050
Aspen	1,150
Pine foliage and twigs	1,100
Cedar	1,050

*Daily requirement (pounds and calories) of good quality, air-dry food, and equivalent of deer browse with usual moisture content for white-tailed deer by size.*

<b>Deer Weight</b>	<b>Dry-air Food (pounds)</b>	<b>Calories</b>	<b>Browse (pounds)</b>
50 to 60 pounds	2	3,600	4
100 pounds	3 to 4	6,300	6 to 8
150 pounds	5 to 6	9,900	10 to 12

But just because it's green and grows, doesn't mean it's deer food.

Although deer eat a great variety of vegetative material, not all plants or parts of plants are good deer forage; nor is every plant, or part of a plant, equally nutritious and palatable to deer at all times of year. Add size and sex of the deer into the mix and the thousands of calories a deer needs to survive everyday doubles or triples. So while we might see GREEN throughout the forest, a deer might be seeing a bare cupboard.

Deer are capable of recognizing nutritional differences and select food accordingly. Preferences should