

## MULE DEER FEEDING HABITS VARY WITH THE CHANGING SEASONS.

Mule deer are known as browsers. From late spring to early fall, mule deer gain weight and build up fat reserves by feeding heavily on broad-leafed plants and grasses. During the winter and early spring, when there is little forage available, their diet is mostly leaves, stems and buds. This type of vegetation is difficult to digest and lacks enough nutritional value to maintain top body condition. As such, mule deer must use stored body fat to survive. A deer's winter survival depends on the weather, its stored fat reserves, and its ability to conserve energy.



Photo by UDWR

## FEEDING DEER...JUST SAY NO!

While well-intentioned people try to help deer by feeding them, they can harm them instead.

- Do not feed deer or provide them with salt or mineral licks.
- Deer are ruminants that need sufficient time to switch from a summer to winter diet. Offering the wrong foods, especially during the winter months, is harmful to deer and can kill them.
- Feeding deer not only makes them lose their natural wariness of humans, it can also contribute to the transmission of disease by unnaturally concentrating deer.
- Attracting deer to your property through feeding may attract predators, like cougars that follow deer herds.
- Feeding deer near neighborhoods and roadways increases the risk of deer-vehicle collisions.
- Annual migration patterns to wintering areas may be disrupted if the deer are enticed to remain at a feeding area.

Mule deer are among the most watchable Utah wildlife, and can generally be seen throughout the state during all seasons of the year. Remember: always observe deer from a safe distance.

## Be Wild Aware-Don't Feed Deer!

For more information visit:  
[www.wildawareutah.org](http://www.wildawareutah.org)

If you have an encounter with aggressive wildlife, please alert the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) office near you. If the encounter occurs after hours or on the weekend, please call your local police department or county sheriff's office, who can contact a conservation officer to handle the situation.

Cedar City	(435) 865-6100	Salt Lake City	(801) 538-4700
Ogden	(801) 476-2740	Springville	(801) 491-5678
Price	(435) 613-3700	Vernal	(435) 781-9453



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Photo by UDWR



Please Do Not Feed Deer

## SHARE THE WILD- Preventing Deer Damage On Your Property

Most Utah foothills, bench areas and valley floors are traditional wintering and foraging areas for mule deer. They will regularly feed on many plants used in landscaping.

- The most effective way to eliminate unwanted browsing by deer is to enclose the area with a fence that is at least 7-8 feet high. Entrances must be closed at all times, particularly at night. Lower fences, such as 4-foot chain-link, and decorative, wood or metal fences will reduce, but not eliminate deer use.
- Wrap highly susceptible landscaping plants with heavy burlap or plastic.
- Wrap trees with wire mesh or plastic cylinders.
- Avoid using ornamental plants in your landscaping. Instead, use native shrubs and plants that can withstand occasional browsing by deer.
- Plants that are preferred by deer and frequently suffer damage include: day lilies, firs, fruit trees, hostas, ivy, junipers, some pines, tulips and yews.



Photo by Phil Douglass  
UDWR

For a complete list of plants visit: <http://wildlife.utah.gov/habitat/deer-browse.php>

Teach your family and neighbors about deer conflict prevention.



Mule Deer  
Tracks  
4 - 5 inches



Photo by  
Brent Stettler  
UDWR

### AT HOME

Deer can become trapped and injured falling into window wells. Once in the well, deer may crash through the glass and do damage to the home in their efforts to escape. To prevent this cover window wells with commercially available grates, bubbles, fencing or build a cover using quarter-inch hardware cloth or wire.

### KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

- Always give deer plenty of space, especially while driving.
- It is against the law to allow your dogs to chase or harass deer.
- Males, or bucks, can be especially aggressive during the fall breeding season, or "rut," which usually occurs in November.
- If you see a deer fawn on its own, the best thing to do is to keep your distance and leave the animal right where you found it. The mother is usually close by.
- If a deer knocks you down, curl into a ball, protect your head and lie still until it retreats.

### ROAD SAFETY

- SLOW DOWN while driving through deer habitats, especially at dawn and dusk, and during the spring and winter months when deer are migrating.
- Pay attention to wildlife crossing warning signs.
- Watch for movement along the roadway. If you see one deer there may be more.
- [watchfordeerutah.com](http://watchfordeerutah.com)

## BE WILD AWARE Mule Deer Facts

- Mule deer are found throughout Utah in many types of habitats, including neighborhoods and backyards.
- The mule deer gets its name from the size of its mule-like ears. It is the smallest member of the deer family in Utah.
- Mule deer are extremely popular game animals in Utah.
- The breeding season, called "rut," typically occurs in November. Female deer, called does, typically give birth to one or two offspring in late spring or early summer.
- Only the males, or bucks, have antlers. They are shed every year.
- Mule deer migrate annually from high mountain habitats where they summer, to lower elevations in the winter, to avoid deep snow and to find food.
- Mule deer are the primary food source for cougars in Utah. As such, cougars follow deer during their annual migrations.
- They can be seen throughout the year and are mainly active at dusk and dawn. In winter, they may be active throughout the day.



Photo by UDWR