

Name _____

Deer Dining: Nature's Gentle Plant Eaters



Deer are herbivores, which means they eat only plants. They do not hunt or eat other animals. Instead, their diet is made up of grasses, leaves, fruits, and twigs. Since they eat plants, deer are often found in places where there is plenty of vegetation, such as forests, meadows, and grasslands.

Deer have a special way of eating their food. They use their flat teeth to grind plants into smaller pieces. Their long legs and necks help them reach leaves on trees and shrubs. Some species, like the white-tailed deer, can stand on their back legs to grab food from higher branches.

In spring and summer, when plants are plentiful, deer eat tender grass, fresh leaves, and flowering plants. During autumn, they often eat acorns and other nuts to build up fat for the colder months. In winter, food is harder to find, so deer may eat bark, twigs, and leftover dried leaves.

Deer do not hunt because they are not predators. Instead, they spend much of their time grazing. They have to eat a lot to stay healthy, sometimes consuming several pounds of food each day. Their excellent sense of smell helps them locate food even when it is hidden under snow.

Because of their diet, deer play an important role in nature. They help control plant growth and spread seeds through their waste, which helps plants grow in new areas. This makes deer an important part of their ecosystem.