

Fresh Rabbit Food Tips

Follow these tips to keep your rabbit's food fresh.

By Ifsha Buttitta

Rabbit owners have created some interesting ways to make veggies and greens stay fresh. For example, Roxanne Jones of Roxanne's Rabbit Rescue, Inc., in Florida, rolls parsley and cilantro in a paper towel to preserve its life. She said that parsley and cilantro last about three days in the fridge and lettuce lasts about a week. Although she hasn't tried it yet, Jones knows some people who keep washed lettuce fresh by stuffing it into a pillowcase within the refrigerator.

Along the same lines, Judith Pierce, president/chapter manager of the San Diego House Rabbit Society, suggested lightly dampening individual greens, wrapping them in a folded paper towel and then placing the bundle into the refrigerator. "The key is not to store them away too wet," she said. "The wetness and cold temperatures can cause them to turn black and slimy, ruining the whole bunch." She also washes and spins dry veggies in a salad spinner. In her experience, most vegetables keep for about five days in the fridge.

Wash vegetables thoroughly before giving them to your rabbit. Pick off any pieces of greens that appear to be going bad.

Although, we might prefer cooked broccoli over raw or vice versa, don't give your rabbit this option. "Rabbits are capable of digesting raw vegetables and plant materials; they are not designed to digest cooked food," says Susan Smith, professor of nutritional sciences at the University of Wisconsin. Cooking also reduces a food's fiber content and nutrient value — both important components of a healthy rabbit's diet, according to Smith.

Fresh, raw veggies offer your rabbit variety and nutrition. "Frozen, canned or cooked vegetables will not provide your rabbit companion with the nutrition and fiber he needs," Pierce said.