Feeding Two-Toed Sloths

Sloths have a complex digestive system that can slowly process large amounts of plant material, but only handle limited amounts of protein or sugary foods.

A Balanced Diet

A good estimate for how much to feed your sloth is 10 percent of their body weight. For example, a 15-pound sloth should have 1.5 pounds of food each day.

The diagram to the right shows the types of foods and relative amounts in a balanced sloth diet. You can offer “browse” (small branches, leaves, and flowers) free choice, along with the balanced diet, to keep your sloth engaged in natural foraging behavior.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Maintaining a sloth’s environment between 75 and 85 °F is crucial for their digestion.
- Sloths only urinate and defecate once or twice a week and may lose up to 30 percent of their body weight afterward. Weigh them after elimination to accurately monitor weight trends.
- Cut food items into long, thin pieces to help sloths grasp and eat them.
- Avoid feeding sloths seeds from fruit, pumpkin, or other items. Seeds are harder to digest and may contribute to a blockage.
- Count any “treats” for training or other activities as part of the daily balanced diet. Feeding these items in addition to the balanced diet can result in overfeeding or more sugar or starch than a sloth can digest.

CONSULT YOUR VETERINARIAN for more guidance on sloth nutrition and how to maintain optimal body weight.

COMMERCIAL BISCUITS:
low-starch, high-fiber primate biscuits such as leaf-eater or browse biscuits

LEAFY GREENS:
romaine lettuce, kale, dandelion, other leafy greens

NON-LEAFY VEGETABLES:
sweet potato, pumpkin, squash, zucchini, carrots, green beans

PROTEIN (optional):
dog food, hard-boiled eggs

BROWSE:
hibiscus, mulberry, fruit tree branches, zinnia, forsythia, locust, plumbago

FRUIT:
apple, pear, mango, papaya, melon

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LEAFY GREENS: romaine lettuce, kale, dandelion, other leafy greens

NON-LEAFY VEGETABLES: sweet potato, pumpkin, squash, zucchini, carrots, green beans

PROTEIN (optional): dog food, hard-boiled eggs

BROWSE: hibiscus, mulberry, fruit tree branches, zinnia, forsythia, locust, plumbago

FRUIT: apple, pear, mango, papaya, melon