



## Nutritional Quality and Yield of Aspen Suckers Under Simulated Browsing

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Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) typically produces vast numbers of root suckers when the mature stand is removed, as in clear-felling or wildland fire. These suckers are highly palatable to wild and domestic ungulates and have the capacity to provide significant quantities of forage for several years post-treatment and still grow to be adult trees if season and intensity of browsing are controlled. Our objective was to determine how time (early, mid- and late summer) and intensity (20%, 40% and 60% removal of current season's growth) of clipping (simulated browsing) affected sucker growth, survival and nutritional quality. We found that suckers clipped at 60% yielded up to 150 kg /ha of digestible dry matter (DDM) and 33 kg/ha of crude protein in the second year after stand clear-felling. Both % crude protein and % In Vitro true digestibility (IVTD) decreased with intensity of clipping and advancing season, but these differences were small for IVTD. Relatively high levels of crude protein (range: 11% to 22%) and IVTD (range: 80% to 90%) suggest that carefully managed browsing of aspen suckers can add appreciably to the nutritional budgets of ungulates for at least two years post-treatment.

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