



Garden Talk

Gardening with Deer & Rabbit

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Deer continue to mesmerize with their large eyes, subtle colors and graceful movements. An added bonus is a fawn moving among a herd with their speckled colors and sometimes awkward antics.

Our encounters with this majestic creature is more frequent as our town grows. Warmer winters reduce the natural deaths in the population. Predators have been reduced, even eliminated in some neighborhoods. Deer become down right bold during times of drought and what better place to catch some sustenance than by feeding on our carefully tended landscape and gardens.

Some plants are less appealing to animals than others. These plants tend to have an odor, taste or texture they are not fond of. Sound like a lovely garden? You might be pleasantly surprised by some of the plants on the list. You don't have to resort to a stark, ugly rock landscape.

Several highly successful measures can reduce the damage by these creatures and it all begins with fencing and natural barriers. You can choose between man made or natural methods to keep pests out.

Fencing - should be at least 6 feet tall. You may want to enclose just your vegetable or flower gardens to reduce the amount of fencing used in the yard. Fencing out rabbit will need mesh smaller than a chain link size.

Bird netting wrapped several times around the trunk of a tree is highly affective at preventing deer from peeling the bark off.

Electric fence - a single wire at the 2-4 foot level is effective especially when baited with peanut butter. Fold a piece of aluminum foil in half and place over the wire. Encourage deer to taste the electric fence by placing peanut butter on the bottom side of the aluminum foil at 10 foot increments.

Motion detectors triggering a high-pressure water spray can be highly effective. Noise and lights combined can provide an element of surprise and drive animals away.

Organic Controls - Unpleasant odors and smells associated with danger and death can keep pests away. Feces or urine from predators such as lions and coyote work well as long as the scent is fresh.



Blood Meal works in a similar way. Used as an organic garden fertilizer, deer and rabbit perceive this blood smell as a predator near by that has just killed another animal. Their thinking is, "Danger! I could be next." Reapply frequently to keep the scent fresh.

Human hair has mixed results only because deer become accustomed to the scent quickly.

Scented Soaps shaved and sprinkled around plants or hung from the branches has some affect.

Repellents - Commercial repellents have excellent results. The most effective repellents use a combination of garlic, rotten eggs, castor oil or hot pepper. The key to success is the ability to reapply as the new growth appears. This is especially true in spring when animals are attracted to the tender new flower and leaf buds.

Highly effective when sprayed in the landscape before animal activity is present. Repel even more animals by interchanging repellents. This will ensure a broader range of animal deterrents.

Dogs, Dogs, Dogs - Last but not least, don't underestimate the family dog. The mere presence of another mammal will do a lot to keep animals out of the landscape.

The following plants are rarely, or seldom, eaten by deer and rabbits.

Flowers

Ageratum
Alyssum
Anemone
Artemesia
Astilbe
Aster
Begonia
Baby's Breath
Balloon Flower
Bellflower
Bergenia
Bleeding Heart
Buttercup
Candytuft
Chrysanthemum
Colchicum
Coreopsis
Columbine
Coneflower
Daffodil
Dame's Rocket
Daphne
Daylily
Delphinium
Dianthus
Fern
Foxglove
Gaillardia
Geranium
Heather
Hellebore
Heuchera
Hollyhock
Hyacinth
Iris
Lamb's Ear
Lantana
Larkspur
Leopard's Bane
Lily
Lily-of-the-Valley
Lobelia
Lupine
Marigold
Monkshood
Morning Glory
Nasturtium

Ornamental pepper
Peony
Poppy
Primrose
Red Hot Poker
Salvia
Sedum
Stock
Salvia
Shasta Daisy
Silver King
Silver Mound
Snapdragon
Snow-in-Summer
Statice
Sundrops
Toad flax
Vinca
Viola
Yarrow
Zinnia

Herbs

Basil
Catmint
Catnip
Dill
Lavender
Mint
Oregano
Parsley
Rosemary
Sage
Thyme
Tansy

Vines & Ground covers

Ajuga
Boston Ivy
Honeysuckle
Periwinkle
Virginia creeper
Wisteria

Shrubs

Barberry
Beauty Bush
Boxwood
Buckthorn
Butterfly Bush
Caryopteris
Cotoneaster
Current
Deutzia
Dogwood
Elder
European Privet
Forsythia
Gardenia
Holly
Juniper
Lilac
Mahonia
Mock Orange
Mountain Laurel
Mugo Pine
Nandina
Osmanthus
Pieris

Quince
Rose of Sharon
Spirea
Russian Olive
Serviceberry
Spirea
Viburnum
Weigela
Winter Jasmine
Wintergreen
Wisteria
Yew
Yucca

Trees

Ash
Birch
Cedar
Corkscrew Willow
Crape Myrtle
Dogwood
Fir
Flowering Cherry
Ginkgo
Hawthorn
Locust
Maple
Palms
Serviceberry
Spruce
Pine
Walnut



NOTE: While these plants have shown to be less desirable as deer and rabbit food, they are not guaranteed to be fool proof. If animals get hungry enough, they are liable to try anything at least once.

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