

Gardening with Deer & Rabbit

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, made from chickens, 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 accustom 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 list are plants that are rarely or seldom eaten by deer and rabbits.

Flowers & Ferns

- 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
- Daylilly
- Delphinium
- Dianthus
- Fern
- Foxglove
- Gaillardia

- Geranium
- Heather
- Hellebore
- Heuchera
- Hollyhock
- Hosta
- 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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