



Are the deer eating everything in your yard? The information below from Cindi Sullivan should help!

Estimates put the number of deer roaming around the lower 48 states at 15-20 million. Multiply that by the 5-10 pounds of food per day that a typical healthy adult deer needs to eat and the potential damage is staggering.

Oh and of course you need to know that deer are social creatures, they tend to travel in groups of 2-7, so in addition to eating your plants, deer can damage your garden by walking around on it and trampling beds.

I should point out of course that the deer problem is all our fault. We are continuing to develop away their native habitat, and we have virtually eliminated their natural predators, like coyotes. Certainly, striking a balance between man and nature is an age-old problem, and personally, I think I'd rather live with deer instead of coyotes, but that's another story.

Barriers

Using barriers can control damage by deer. The best barrier by far is an eight-foot tall, electrified fence topped with barbed wire surrounding the entire yard. This is an impractical solution for most of us though!

The next best thing might be a plastic mesh fence. Sometimes known as "snow fencing:" this product is available in black or green to be a little less obtrusive than the orange types. You can buy this product in eight feet tall, 100-foot wide sections. Staple the fencing to tall stakes or trees to protect your plantings. You'll also need to use smaller stakes to secure the bottom of the fencing so that the deer won't go underneath it.

Fishing line can also be strung from stake to stake at about three feet high to protect smaller garden areas. Keep in mind that if the deer are panicked or particularly hungry, these barriers will be easily broken.

Another option is to fence individual plants. Young trees or very desirable plants can be protected with turkey wire fence (4x2 14 gauge welded wire fencing) This can be purchased in 50 or 100 foot rolls and cut to fit plants. Laying chicken wire or hardware cloth on the ground around plantings also seems to work at least temporarily-they don't like stepping on the wire.

Repellants

Repellants will sometime work at least temporarily to control deer damage. There are various repellent solutions on the market now. Deer Away and Tree Guard are two brand name products you might try. Follow label directions carefully when applying these products, keeping in mind that some are not labeled for use on vegetables and fruits—they are only to be used on ornamental plants. These products will have to be re applied after rains and as new growth appears—new shoots are usually the most desirable plant parts for deer.

You can make up a homemade solution using this recipe:

- 3 rotten eggs
- One gallon of water
- Teaspoon garlic powder
- Teaspoon cayenne pepper

Mix and apply with a sprayer or a watering can. Yes, it smells terrible, but the smell will dissipate in the garden.

Some other deer repellent recipes and products you might try are:

- Blood meal
- Milorganite-a composted sludge material
- Bars of soap hung on trees
- Human hair

Motion sensitive products

There are also motion sensitive sprinklers or sprayers that are on the market to deter deer, as well as high pitched audio devices. These products may be impractical if you have pets of course.

One listener reports this:

I heard you talking about keeping deer out of the garden this morning. Here's what I did. I went to the local hardware store and bought a security light with a motion detector built in. On one of the outlets, I installed a 150 watt spot light. On the other outlet, I screwed in a 110 volt plug adapter. I then plugged in a radio to that outlet and turned the volume up about 1/2 way. When a deer enters the area, he is startled by the light and the noise and usually runs away. I was losing about half my corn to deer and crows. Now, I have more corn than I can eat!

Plant selection

If the deer continue to give you problems, you might want to modify your planting plans and practices. Give up on plants that are particularly appealing to the deer. These typically include fruit trees, roses (yes, even with thorns!), euonymous, lilies, hostas and tulips. Actually any plant that has soft leaves and a high water content will appeal to deer. Deer will typically feed in our gardens more in the early spring when wild food is less available and in late summer when they are foraging to fatten up for the winter.

Deer will tend to avoid plants that are extremely aromatic and that have fuzzy, pubescent leaves.

Some plants that deer will usually not nibble on are:

TREES	SHRUBS	FLOWERS	MISC
Ginkgo	Kolkwitzia	Astilbe	Ajuga
Oxydendron	Vitex	Bee Balm	Allium
	Daphnes	Bleeding Heart	Artemisia
	Amelanchier	Columbine	Crocus
	Barberry	Coneflower	Daffodil
	Buddleia	Coreopsis	Epimedium
American holly	Honeysuckle	Foxglove	Hyacinth
Ash	Itea	Geraniums (true)	Lamb's ears

Hawthorn	Junipers	Goldenrod	Lamium
Hemlock	Leucothoe	Hellebore	Lavendar
Japanese maples	Mahonia	Hollyhock	Liriope
Magnolia	Nandina	Iris	Pachysandra
Oaks	Pieris japonica	Iris	Pulmonarias
Picea pungens	Potentilla	Lily of the Valley	Rosemary
Pine	Rose of Sharon	Lobelia	Sage
Robinia psuedoacacia	Spiraea	Marigold	Sweet woodruff
Serviceberry	Spiraea	Peony	Thyme
Willows	Yucca	Sedum	Wild ginger
Sassafrass	Viburnum (arrowwood)	Yarrow	Lantana
	Weigela	Angelonia	Lily-of-the-Valley
	Rhus thyphinus	Dicentra	Perovskia
	Hypericum	Gomphrena	Cleome
	Cotinus	Snapdragons	

These controls will not ever be 100% effective. Some solutions may work sometimes; spending time in your garden, keeping the human scent there may be the most effective control. The overriding problem is that we are developing wildlife such as deer out of their natural habitat and therefore they have no other options but to feed on our gardens.

From *In the Garden* by Cindi Sullivan

84 WHAS
 4000 #1 Radio Drive
 Louisville, KY 40218
CindiSullivan@whas.com

WAVE3TV
 725 South Floyd St.
 Louisville, KY 40203
csullivan@wave3tv.com