

OH DEER!

Deer are a major problem for gardeners in Connecticut. Their population is increasing rapidly as development reduces their habitat and hunting decreases in the state. I see deer damage in New Haven, in suburban neighborhoods, and in the country!

The best line of defense against deer is fencing. It is also very impractical for most homeowners. A deer fence must be at least **8 feet tall**. Deer have been known to jump 10 foot tall fences at times. The book *Deerproofing Your Yard* describes at least seven types of fencing and is an excellent reference on the subject. One of the best and most effective deer fences is from Benner's Gardens in New Hope, PA. They can be reached at 1.800.244.3337 or at www.deerfencers.com. Their fencing is a black mesh that is practically invisible, easy to install and relatively inexpensive. *Deerproofing Your Yard* suggests rethinking the layout of your yard; these design concepts are well worth considering and a wise choice in the long run. You can create a "deer-free zone" where you can garden to your heart's content without deer damage. Consider creating barrier hedges of boxwood, bayberry, dwarf spruces, aromatic herbal plants, and other plants that deer don't like around your deer-susceptible gardens.

Another approach to keeping deer out of your garden is to lay chicken wire mesh fencing **ON THE GROUND** around the outer edges of your gardens or yard. Use four foot wide sections of chicken wire. When the deer approach your garden, their feet are caught in the chicken wire, they panic and run away. This tactic works well, especially in combination with repellents, as long as it is maintained and not buried by leaves or plants. Attaching fishing line to trees at various heights will be nearly invisible yet will startle the deer when they walk into it.

The second line of defense against deer is repellents and there are two different types. The first repels the deer by a smell that makes them stay away from your plantings. Repellents appear to work if used regularly, according to directions:

***Deer Scram** is an organic, granular repellent that is best applied as a protective perimeter strip around flowers, plants and shrubs. Deer Scram will effectively, safely and naturally shield your landscaping, ornamentals, vegetables and trees when used as directed and consistently applied every 30-45 days. Deer Scram is a fully organic and biodegradable granular deer-control product that contains no harmful chemicals or toxins that could hurt the animals, environment and, most importantly, you or your family. A 100% guaranteed deer browsing solution! And it stops damage by rabbits too!

***Super Repellent**, described below, also deters by scent.

It has been reported that dogs will repel deer. Although many people tell me that this works, just as many tell me that it doesn't. If you have a dog, encourage it to mark its territory on the outer edges of your property. It does not seem necessary to leave the dog out all night. The mere scent of the dog, in some instances, seems to help.

The second kind of deer repellents are those that repel the deer by making the plants distasteful. These have varying degrees of effectiveness. The most effective last on the plants for one to three months. In February when deer browse really picks up, you should be especially vigilant. Therefore, plants can be sprayed before winter sets in as that is when deer are the hungriest and natural forage is dormant or covered with snow. In the growing season, the same repellents must be reapplied often when the plants are actively growing. The following are repellents which we have found to be effective:

***Deer Stopper/PlotSaver** (Messina Wildlife's) is an effective, pleasant smelling, liquid deer repellent for use on all flowers, shrubs and fruit trees to prevent browsing and rubbing damage from deer. The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) lists Deer Stopper for use by organic growers and may be used on fruits and vegetables. Deer Stopper is applied approximately every 30 days, regardless of weather and watering. Deer Stopper dries clear and odor free in about 20 minutes and will not wash off after a heavy rain. 100% SATISFACTION GUARANTEED.

***Super Repellent** is an innovative product that will successfully meet all your animal and insect repellency needs. This blend of botanical essential oils provides wide spectrum animal repellency along with insect repellency and insecticidal properties. Essential oils are "confusants," they work by confusing browsers; the scent of the protected plant is overridden by odors of compounds animals and insects find offensive, unpalatable, or poisonous. Together, these blended botanical essential oils work synergistically, enhancing each others attributes, creating a product greater than the sum of its parts. They are all natural and may be applied every 30 days to edible crops, fruit trees and the like.

***Liquid Fence Deer & Rabbit Repellent** is an environmentally safe and biodegradable solution to all your deer and rabbit problems. Best of all, this easy-to-use, long lasting rain resistant spray is family and pet friendly so you can use it worry-free. And because it's all natural, it doesn't hurt the deer or rabbits! They're so confident that this product is completely safe and effective; they back it up with a written 100% money-back guarantee

We found that a 3 week cycle using the smells they don't like and the tastes they don't like works the best. The secret is to stay on schedule.

APPLY TWO PRODUCTS EVERY THREE WEEKS.

Not once a month, not three weeks and two days, but every three weeks...

Step 1: Apply Deer Scram around just the plants that the deer eat in your garden. Don't waste it by spreading it around the perimeter of your property or around every plant you have. Daylilies, lilies, hostas, hollies, phlox, asters, hydrangeas, and sedums are just a few of their favorite foods.

Step 2: Apply Deer Stopper or SuperRepellent to the new growth on plants that they eat. If there has been a lot of rain, spray the entire plant.

When deer density is high, it is best to alternate repellents every few months.

The third line of defense against deer is to use "deer resistant plants". I have studied and compared at least five reputable lists of plants that deer won't eat. There is virtually little agreement about which plants are truly deer resistant and I have concluded that deer will eat most anything if they are hungry enough. The degree of deer damage depends, to a great extent, on the harshness of the winter, the degree of drought in the summer, and the overall quantity and quality of the food sources for deer in the wild. Deer are attracted to fertilized plantings as they are inherently more nutritious. If you have tremendous deer pressure, consider NOT fertilizing the plants on the outer edges of your yard. The most commonly agreed upon "deer resistant plants" are listed on a separate handout. This list, named "*Plants that deer USUALLY won't eat*" is the result of gardening in Southern Connecticut for over 20 years, along with interviewing many gardeners in high deer density neighborhoods. I would appreciate your input. If there are plants not on this list that the deer don't eat in your yard, please let me know. If there are plants on this list that the deer eat, I would also appreciate that information. Together, we can combine our information to make gardening with deer more interesting and less frustrating.

Remember, the plants on the deer list will probably be eaten in a harsh winter or following a drought. THE BEST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST DEER IS FENCING AND THE REGULAR APPLICATION OF DEER REPELLENTS!

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