

## How to keep deer away with barriers and natural deer repellents

Nothing can be more picturesque than the sight of a deer loping through a field - unless it's on its way to the garden and chews your plants to the ground. That's when Bambi, the beautiful beast, turns into a destructive pest that you don't want around.

It's happening more and more as deer populations grow and humans build homes in what was once rural deer habitat.

What do deer eat? Anything vegetative, although they become less picky the hungrier they get (just like humans). They also eat a lot. The average adult male can consume more than five pounds of food each day.

How do you keep deer out of the garden? No matter what method you choose, early intervention is best. It's much easier to deter deer before the herd has decided that your backyard is the best dining spot in town. There are six broad categories of deer repellent. They include:

**Motion Activated Sprayers** - Even deer don't like an unexpected cold blast of water. The sudden noise, movement and spray scares animals away, teaching them to avoid the area in the future.

**Fencing** - Generally considered the best remedy but can be unsightly and expensive. The conventional deer-proof fence is eight feet high and features woven wire. You may be able to get away with a shorter fence as deer are opportunistic nibblers and any barrier may be enough to dissuade them if there is alternative food in the area. Sometimes something as simple as a plastic snow fence is enough to keep them out of your yard.

**Electric Fencing** - A notch up from regular fencing since it adds an electrical shock, has the same general advantages and disadvantages. (Strange, but true fact about electric fencing: people smear peanut butter on aluminum foil attached to the fence. The peanut butter is a powerful lure and once the deer's nose makes contact it won't want to repeat the experience.) For another, less expensive electric alternative, check out our Havahart Electronic Deer Repellent that we carry.

**Deer Repellents** - Anything that is sprayed, dusted or left around plants to ward off deer. We'll go into more detail about what's available below.

**Ultrasonic Devices** - Which don't play music for deers' ears, but, instead emit noise that they can't stand. Kind of like playing "Heavy Metal" for your grandmother who loves Lawrence Welk.

**Netting** - Great for small trees. Tree Netting allows them to get sun and rain, but keeps the deer away. Easy to use - safe and humane!

In addition to man-made deterrents, you can also plant flowers, bushes and trees, which deer are known to dislike. Colorado State University says that Black-Eyed Susans, California fuschia, daffodils, lavender, Virginia creeper and mountain mahogany are among the plants that deer steer clear of. (That said, desperate deer do desperate things. If it is a sparse food year, deer will tend to eat whatever they can find.)

Other deer control methods include harvesting crops as early as possible, which gives deer less of an opportunity to dine on your vegetables and fruit. Grow "lure" crops a short distance from the plants you do want to protect (Be advised that a lure crop may backfire. While it may keep deer out of the corn for a season, providing food to deer will keep them coming back and in greater numbers, which may ultimately worsen the problem.)

The scent of humans or dogs used to be enough to drive away the hungriest of deer, but now deer are used to having us around, so hanging panty hose stuffed with human hair - an old-time remedy - no longer does the trick. More and more gardeners are turning to repellents. Deer repellents smell bad and taste worse, which is why they work. Their effectiveness depends on how much feeding pressure the deer face - how hungry they are - or how attractive your plants are to them.

It's hard to sort out which repellent to buy. Some studies recommend one thing while another one says something completely different. The best thing to do is experiment yourself and find out what deer in your area dislike. Keep in mind that what works can vary from year to year. Deer can become used to repellents, which means what first was a powerful deterrent could become less so over time. That's why it can be a good idea to rotate their use.