



## Defending Against Deer

Everyone who lives in or near deer habitat has their own opinions and experiences with “sharing” their gardens with the resident deer populations. Deer are beautiful, yes, and they can cause real problems in the garden. Here are some suggestions for deer-proofing your yard/garden:

- **Fencing**—the only sure thing! You needn’t fence your entire property if you live on vast acreage. Just enclose the area or items you’d really like to reserve for your own enjoyment. If you can’t stand the appearance of a fence, consider covering it with an attractive vining plant. A vine can provide privacy, if that’s desired, and it can perk up an otherwise drab, sterile-looking fence line. Materials used to build fences are as varied as the people building them are. Considerations should include longevity desired, necessary strength, and the abilities of the builder. Nylon or metal mesh is the most recommended type of fencing due its versatility, low cost, and longevity. Once a fence is constructed, the area it surrounds is well protected from deer damage, and it becomes a permanent facet of the yard/garden. The only real drawbacks are the time and money involved in the initial construction. After that, the protection a fence provides to your valued plants is consistent and requires little if any additional work/money. Considering the frustrations and costs of damaged plants, a fence is usually an excellent investment, and can greatly improve your garden and the enjoyment you get from it.
- **Repellents**—there are many types of repellents on the market, all of them claiming to be “the one”. The following are some options we at Home Grown Gardens recommend.
  1. **Garlic clips**—these are simple to use: just attach the clip to the plant you wish to protect. They require no maintenance. They have been used successfully in reforestation projects to protect tender young seedlings against deer browse. They last between 4 and 6 months, and are recommended for use in the warmer months of the year when the temperature improves the volatility of the garlic oil inside the clips. The number of clips used is directly proportional to the area needing protection. A small bush or tree seedling requires only one clip; a large shrub may require two or more.
  2. **Hot Pepper Spray**—a little dab’ll do ya...apparently deer don’t like spicy food! This spray is completely safe for humans and other animals. A word of caution: the naturally occurring chemical in this spray is capsicum, which is extremely potent. Use gloves while applying a pepper spray, and be sure to spray with caution to keep it out of your eyes. Also, do not use pepper spray on food crops.
  3. **This 1 Works**—a product containing Bitrex, said to be the most bitter substance known today. Do not use this product on edible plants, as it does not wash off and will taint the flavor of the crop. This spray is similar to the Bitter Apple spray used to prevent puppies from unwanted chewing. A distinct advantage of this particular spray is that one application is often all that is necessary. It is usually resistant to washing off even in heavy rains. Reapplication is only recommended during the fast growth period of the plant when new foliage may need protection. There is no odor with this product, and no mixing required, so it is quite easy to use. Again, use gloves during application, and don’t spray during windy periods.

**Home Grown Gardens**

541-758-2137 \* 4845 SE Third Street, Corvallis, Oregon, 97333

4. Hinder—a spray that provides an odor barrier that is offensive to deer, but not to humans. It is safe for use on food crops and for use around pets. The active ingredient here is Ammonia soap of fatty acids. The product is considered earth friendly, making it a good choice for gardeners concerned about the environment and the food they grow.

- **There are also many home remedies.** People hang bars of deodorant soap; strings with bells attached; homemade egg wash (1 fresh egg to 1 quart of water well shaken then sprayed on). Some people stand firmly by their strategy while others try everything with little or no effect. Use your judgement regarding what will work best for you considering your time and resource availability.

- **Resistant Plants**

Possibly the best way to avoid plant damage caused by hungry deer is to plant items they don't find appetizing. Remember that any given deer on any given day may eat any given plant. No plant is deer "proof", but some plants are touted as being quite resistant. We offer the following list of suggestions, all of which are known to perform well in the Willamette Valley.

**Trees**

Albizia  
Ash  
Cedar  
Douglas Fir  
Fig  
Fir  
Ginkgo  
Hawthorn  
Japanese Maple  
Magnolia  
Oak  
Pine  
Spruce  
Vine Maple  
Western Redbud

**Vines**

China Blue  
English Ivy  
Jasmine  
Potato Vine  
Wisteria

**Shrubs**

Abelia  
Bamboo  
Barberry  
Boxwood  
Buddleia  
Cistus  
Coralberry  
Cotoneaster  
Daphne  
Escallonia  
Evergrn.  
Huckleberry  
Flowering Quince  
Gooseberry  
Heath  
Heather  
Holly  
Juniper  
Lavatera  
Lilac  
Mahonia  
Nandina  
Potentilla  
Pyracantha  
Rhododendron  
Salal  
Sarcococca  
Snowberry  
Sumac

Viburnum

**Perennials/Annuals**

Ageratum  
Armeria  
Artemesia  
Aster  
Astilbe  
Bear's Breech  
Bee Balm  
Begonia (tuberous)  
Bleeding Heart  
Brachycome  
Calla Lily  
California Poppy  
Campanula posch.  
Candytuft  
Canna  
Centaurea  
Chrysanthemum  
Columbine  
Coreopsis  
Crocsmia  
Crocus  
Daffodil  
Dahlia  
Daylily  
Erigeron  
Erysimum  
Ferns (most)  
Fescue ovina

Foxglove

Fragaria  
Gaillardia  
Helleborus sp.  
Herbs (most)  
Penstemon  
Phlox  
Purple Cone Flower  
Red Hot Poker  
Rudbeckia  
Santolina  
Scabiosa  
Scaevola  
Sea Lavander  
Sedge  
Shasta Daisy  
Snow-in-summer  
Stachys  
Stipa  
Veronica  
Vinca  
Yarrow

**Home Grown Gardens**