

PROTECTING YOUR GARDEN AGAINST DEER

1. Plant what deer don't want.

Use thorny plants and those with fuzzy or leathery leaves. Some gardeners suggest oregano, rosemary, rhubarb, asparagus, or garlic, however, what/how much deer eat depends a lot on the season, the particular plant, the weather and the availability of other foods. The more hungry they are, the less selective they'll be.

2. Repel deer with smell and taste.

Repellents discourage deer from feeding either because they have a bad taste or a noxious smell. Rotten eggs, garlic, blood meal and sulfur seem to be the most effective deterrents vs. repellents with a bitter taste.

Repellents work best as soon as you see deer damage. Make sure you follow directions and reapply as recommended. Most gardeners get the best results through consistent applications and by rotating repellents. If you continue to see deer damage, switch to a different repellent, or try a frightening device.

3. Frighten deer away.

Deer are always on the alert for predators (coyotes, wolves, dogs, people) and sudden, unexpected noises will send a deer running. Predator urine

The challenge is to keep deer from becoming accustomed to the noise/movement, so move the devices around to different places in your garden. Try reflective streamers that move in the wind or motion-sensors that send a shot of water in their direction. A barking dog is a good deer deterrent, but only if it poses a true threat. Deer will ignore non-stop barkers that are corralled or tethered.

4. Create a physical barrier.

Fencing is the most permanent and reliable deer-control solution. An effective fence needs be at least 7 feet tall staked securely to wood or metal posts, and go all the way to the ground. In areas with very severe deer problems, you can add a second fence several feet outside the main fence. Deer generally dislike entering a small, confined area and tend to jump fences only if they see a clear landing spot.

You can also wrap shrubs with black nylon netting or nylon window screening. This is a very useful technique to help reduce winter browsing. In the vegetable garden, you can also protect plants from being eaten with a tightly secured layer of garden fabric or shade netting.