

DEER BARRIER REPELLENTS

Deer Barrier Repellents are an effective way of controlling deer damage. Barrier repellents come in a variety of forms: scare devices, natural and chemical repellents, and fencing. The following provides specific information on each of these categories. Deer repellent failure can occur because deer are smart and adaptable enough to determine what will not harm them. In areas of high deer density, repellents may be overcome by feeding pressure. In order to prevent this, only use repellents on valuable and deer-preferred plants.

SCARE DEVICES

Scare devices, such as flashing lights and noisemakers, are used to chase deer away from identified areas. They may work for a while but over time, deer may figure out that there is no reason to worry.

Visual Deterrents:

- ?? **Strobe lights** that flash or rotate may startle deer. These lighting systems are activated by timers or motion detectors.
- ?? **Mylar tape**, which is shiny and reflective, can be strung between trees or set as streamers on poles.
- ?? **Scarecrows**, especially if they can be constructed with moving parts
- ?? **“Scare-eye” balloons** filled with helium and tethered above the ground with monofilament line, can also scare away deer.

Noise Deterrents:

- ?? **A Radio or recorded distress calls of other animals** played continuously may frighten away deer.
- ?? **Commercial ultrasonic devices** are available that emit highly amplified sound waves that are nearly inaudible to humans but intolerable to deer.
- ?? **Aluminum pie and tin cans** rattling in the wind may also help deter deer.
- ?? **Motion Activated Ultrasonic Deer and Animal Repellents** are designed to startle deer while not allowing them to become used to the sound. They emit a high pitch ultrasonic blast, just above the frequency of human hearing, disturbing deer.
- ?? **Sonic Deer and Animal Repellents** emit high-pitched loud audible sonic blast that act as a deer repellent and will ward off any intruder.

Water Sprayers:

- ?? The **Smartcrow Motion-Activated Sprinkler** and **Contech Scarecrow Motion Detector Sprinkler** are water sprinklers set to go off by motion detectors or by timers. These work well if the schedule is changed often and can't be learned by the deer. However, since they require a high-pressure water supply, they are not useful in sub-freezing temperatures.
- ?? The **Spray Away Motion Activated Water Repellent** chases deer away from landscape and gardens. They sense the animal by using heat and movement for efficacy. Spray Away pauses for 8 seconds after firing, creating randomness, preventing the animal from becoming accustomed to the repellent.

NATURAL AND COMMERCIAL REPELLENTS

A variety of commercial and homemade barrier repellents can be used to repel deer. Repellents work either by making plants unpalatable or by giving off an offensive odor. The most effective products do both. With just a bad taste, the deer have to taste the plant to know that it is there. If a product only has a repellent smell component, the deer may feed anyway if they are hungry enough. Some national brands are available at nurseries and hardware stores as well as by catalog and over the Internet. The commercial repellents generally work for a while before the deer become used to them. The best way to prevent this from happening is to continually rotate the mode of defense--keep them guessing with these and the other methods. Keep in mind that **repellents are not appropriate for food crops!**

Odor Repellents, examples include

- ?? **Hinder** made from ammonium soaps of fatty acids
- ?? **Bobbex** contains refined proteins and fibers from food processing
- ?? **Repel**, which is made from soap particles
- ?? **Deer Chaser** and **Deer No** are made with citrus scents
- ?? **Magic Circle**, contains bone tar oil
- ?? **Milorganite** is made from treated sewage
- ?? **Deer Away® Repellent** was developed by a paper company to protect tree seedlings from deer, elk, and moose. It contains inedible egg solids to repel big game before they bite
- ?? **Havahart® Deer and Rabbit Repellent** also repels deer from gardens, lawns, trees, shrubs, and landscaped areas.
- ?? **Deer Off/Deer Chasers** are pouches hung from a tree or shrub and ward off deer with its heady, citrus scent
- ?? **Liquid Fence Animal Repellent** and **Deerscram®** are other commercially available products.

Homemade and Natural Repellents

There are several "natural" repellents. The effectiveness of these home-remedy repellents is open for discussion. They include small, fine-mesh bags of human hair (about two handfuls) and bar soap hung from branches of trees (such as Irish Spring and Lifeboy). These bags should be replaced monthly and some deer have been reported to eat the soap bars. Materials that work in one area or for one person may not work at all in an area more highly frequented by deer. The more commercialized repellents include putrefied egg white solids, ammonium soap, and Thiram that is a bitter fungicide. You can also make your own spray with 2 tablespoons hot pepper sauce mixed with 1 tablespoon liquid dish soap, 1 teaspoon garlic powder, and 1 gallon of water.

Taste and Odor Repellents:

- ?? **Deerbusters** premium liquid repellent repels deer by taste and odor. Its ingredients include putrescent egg garlic and hot pepper.
- ?? **Deer Off Deer Repellent** produces a powerful odor and taste barrier that is offensive to deer, rabbits and squirrels, but is mild enough not to bother humans.
- ?? **Bulb Guard® Repellent Concentrate** has a weather-resistant formula that provides safe, effective, and long-lasting protection for bulbs, roots, and foliage.
- ?? **Not Tonight Deer Repellent** uses powdered eggs and white pepper to generate a smell and taste that deer hate. Best of all, it can be used on food crops.
- ?? **Get Away Animal Repellent** uses essential oil of mustard and extracts of chili in a vegetable oil base to repel by odor and taste.
- ?? **Repellex**, a fertilization and deer repellent system, protects both existing and new growth for up to a full year with a single application and is designed with the most bitter-sweet compounds.
- ?? **Tree Guard** is a premixed deer repellent is ideal for annuals, bulbs, and shrubs.
- ?? **Holly Ridge** products containing putrescent egg solids and (hot-tasting) capsaicin. The products are manufactured through Holly Ridge Nursery in Rhode Island.
- ?? **Dr. T's Deer Blocker** is a dual deterrent system that leaves both an odor and a taste that deer find offensive. It is made from putrescent eggs, capsaicin, and garlic.
- ?? **Plant-Pro-Tec** is a 3 1/4" clip-on dispense clip that emits a garlic odor for up to 6 to 8 months. Repelling formulation consists of organic food-grade ingredients; the plastic body photo degrades.

FENCING

Fencing landscape plants and crops is the most effective way to eliminate deer browsing. A variety of fencing designs have been developed. The one most suitable to a specific situation will depend on the size of the area, the topography of the site and the type of vegetation being protected. The most effective deer repellent is a very tall fence. Since deer can jump 12 feet high from a standing position, a fence should be at the very least 8 to 10 feet tall. Adding electric wires or slanting the fence outward will also help keep the deer from getting to your landscaping.

Perimeter Fencing

- ?? High-Tensile Woven Wire (HTWW)
- ?? Chain link
- ?? Double-row wooden, solid wooden
- ?? Mesh-woven wire
- ?? Single or multiple-strand wire electrical or slanted wire non-electrical.

Invisible Black Mesh Barrier/Fencing

- ?? ***The Easy-Up Fence and Benner's Garden Deer Fencing*** can be attached to posts or stakes to create a quick, temporary fence. Individual trees, bushes, and groundcover can be successfully protected with stiff, plastic netting made of tough, UV-stabilized polypropylene. The netting is simply unrolled over groundcover or draped over a bush or tree. It can be rolled up when not needed and reused for several years.
- ?? ***Deer-X Netting*** is another commercially available brand.

Electric Fence Systems use a battery-powered charger sends out short, strong bursts of electricity that shock, yet won't injure potential intruders. Setting up the fence is easy. You simply pound in the fiberglass stakes, clip the polywire onto the insulators, and attach the charger. A baited electric deer fence has been tested and recommended by major universities with a high degree of effectiveness. Deer are attracted to bait stations around the deer fence. When deer lick the bait, they receive a mild and safe startling shock that will train deer to stay clear of that area.

- ?? ***Havahart® Electronic Repellent for Deer*** uses technology that attracts deer to posts with a lure scent. Then it harmlessly repels deer from the yard or garden with an electronic shock.

Netting and Tubing

- ?? **Tubes of Vexar** netting around individual seedlings are an effective method to reduce deer damage to small trees. The material degrades in sunlight and breaks down in three to five years. These tubes can protect just the growing terminals or can completely enclose small trees. Tubes placed around the trunks of larger trees will help prevent trunk damage. Tubes may not, however, protect trunks from damage when bucks use the trees to scrape the velvet off their antlers. Fencing may be required.
- ?? **Paper or Reemay budcaps** form a protective cylinder around the terminal leader and bud. They may help reduce browse damage. Budcaps are rectangular pieces of material folded lengthwise and stapled around the terminal leader.

Useful Websites:

www.livingwithdeer.com

www.mydeergarden.com

www.deer-busters.com

www.deerrepellents.com/

www.havahart.com/nuisance/deer/deer_repellents.htm

www.planetnatural.com/barriersrepellents.html

Books you may find helpful:

Deer Proofing Your Yard and Garden, by Rhonda Massingham Hart, Storey Communications, 1997.

Gardening in Deer Country, by Vincent Drzewucki, Jr., Brick Tower Press, 1998.

Outwitting Deer, by Bill Adler, Jr., Lyons Press, 1999

Wild Neighbors: The Humane Approach to Living with Wildlife, by the Humane Society of the United States, Fulcrum Publishing, 1997