

Deer deterrents are for anyone with a landscape!

Year after year, I see more and more deer in the neighborhoods I work in. even in the neighborhoods of Cleveland where I would have never expected to see deer, they are there. I have put together this bulletin to help my customers make choices about the plants that they grow in their gardens and the possible deterrents that can be used to keep deer from eating those precious plants and flowers in the garden. First, let's start with some of the "home repellents", then I'll take a look at a few of the over the counter repellents available as well as other options. There are many others available, these are some of the ones either I or friends have tried. Finally on the reverse side of this bulletin I'll talk a bit about some of the plants that can successfully be planted in the garden that deer either won't touch or rarely eat. I'll not waste time discussing plants they like, there are far too many of them.



Repellents

- ☞ **Human Hair**, I've been told that putting human hair around will keep deer away. This may be true in southern Ohio and areas where deer are hunted, but please, when I go out into the yard they start walking toward me, so do you really think this is a good deterrent long term? Not in this area.
- ☞ **Soap**, especially Irish spring. This has some merit, quite a few customers use this method of repelling deer and apparently it works to some degree. Usually the soap is cut into sections and hung in an old stocking or sock in a perimeter to keep deer from entering where the desired plants are growing.
- ☞ **Milk, eggs, garlic** mixed in the blender and sprayed on plants. This homemade repellent works quite well, it has but one drawback. That is, it lasts only a few days and must be reapplied very regularly and after a rain. I suspect if a sticking agent like **Wilt-Pruf™** was added, it may last through a rain better.
- ☞ **Liquid fence**, one of the first commercial products I used. Liquid fence works fairly well and is basically the same as the homemade concoction above, but smells far worse. If you opt for liquid fence take the plunge and invest in a sprayer and the concentrate, it will save you money in the long run.
- ☞ **Plantskydd**, I have not used this product. It has blood meal and the formulation I saw was powdered. A friend said it constantly clogged the sprayer. He made the error of not spraying it out. The product fermented in the sprayer and blew up in his garage (YUCK!). Have you tried it? How did it work for you?
- ☞ **Bobbex**, I am currently working with this product, and so far it seems to work very well, it is less smelly than some of the others and lasts a couple of weeks. Supposedly it can be applied in November and will protect plants all winter. I'll let you know how that goes after I use it this winter.
- ☞ **Coyote Urine**, I have no experience with this one either, but I see lots of little receptacles in landscapes where people have used or tried this. I suspect with all the dogs in the neighborhoods, this likely doesn't work that well either. I would love to hear about your observations with this product.
- ☞ **Electronic Gadgets**, Don't waste your time. The ultrasonic one does not work, the one that is supposed to look like wolf or coyote eyes and the one that lets out a high pitch squeal and flashes lights only scares the crap out of unsuspecting people, but not the deer, they are basically immune to most of these gadgets.



- ☞ **Scarecrow**, This electronic motion sensor sprays a three second jet of water on whatever walks in front of it (Sorry mom!). I have used this successfully for several years. If you want to give this device a try, buy it on Ebay, I got two for the price of one. There is now one that has its own water reservoir and is solar powered. This allows it to be easier to move about the garden and there is no worry of a hose bursting when you're not home.

🦌 **Green Screen**, This works similar to the soap. Smelly bags of pepper and meat meal are hung around a perimeter and smell deters the deer. This actually works pretty well. Its only problem is: how do you know when its effectiveness has expired? This was my complaint, they worked very well, then one day the deer feasted on my garden >:(

🦌 **Deer Fence**, The best option! I get deer fencing from Deer Busters. It's easy to install and only requires a bit of annual maintenance . Covering plants loosely with bird netting if you only have a few plants works well too. Worried about the appearance of the fencing? It really isn't that bad, and it is the best deterrent. This is my front landscape, aside from the poles the fencing itself is virtually invisible. The rabbits will chew through the bottom, so don't expect this to keep them out!



Deer Resistant Plants

I'll start out with a few larger plants and groups of plants that are generally not eaten by deer, then I'll move on to some things that I know they do not like. Remember! Everything on this list is subject to tasting by deer and deer in different suburbs and areas will eat different plants. Using plants that the deer leave alone along with repellents will give you a better looking garden with less work and frustration.

- ◆ **Conifers:** Spruce, Pine, Most Junipers are all deer resistant. Taxus and Arborvitae are not! If you want a Taxus type plant, Cephalotaxus or Plum Yew (at right) is a great plant AND almost deer proof!
- ◆ **Shrubs:** Boxwood, Holly (except Japanese Holly), Forsythia, Inkberry, Weigela, Barberry, Bayberry, Pieris Japonica, Leucothoe, Butterfly bush and Japanese Spirea are generally deer resistant, I have seen all of these eaten occasionally (Except boxwood and barberry) if deer pressure is very high.
- ◆ **Grasses:** You say boring? I say no way. There's giant reed grass for a 30' bold statement, to diminutive Japanese forest grass at 6". Grasses come in many colors, shapes and sizes. Deer are browsers, not grazers, grass isn't on their diet. I've never seen deer eat grasses except perhaps in spring to "taste" them.
- ◆ **Perennials:** These include members of the mint family, most plants that have a strong smell or have prickly or fuzzy leaves. Prickly daisy, Lenten rose, Foxglove, Daffodils, Iris, Coneflowers, Poppies, Meadow Safron (Colchicum at right), Ferns, Ornamental onions (Allium), Lavender and other Herbs are all mostly deer proof. Some are quite toxic to deer and to people as well.
- ◆ **Annuals:** Annual Vinca (plant these when the soil warms, they don't like cold roots, at left), Snapdragons, Gazanias, Petunias and Flowering tobacco are good choices that deer leave along. Zinnias, marigolds, and Lobelia are good choices. There are also quite a few that can be grown from seed. I pour over seed catalogs every winter, looking for just the right new deer resistant plants to grow.



Planting shrubs, perennials and annuals that are deer resistant along with the use of repellents will help keep deer from decimating your gardens and causing your blood pressure to rise. The plants noted here are some of the things that I grow and have seen in other's landscapes where deer problems are high. This is NOT by any means an exhaustive list and there are many online resources for plants that are good in areas where deer are at their worst. So do a bit of research and plant accordingly. If you find something that is especially nice and the deer do not like it, let me know so

I can share with other customers. Every year I learn more about what deer will eat and what they don't like. Happy Gardening!