

Resisting Deer and Rabbits

Wildlife, particularly deer and rabbits, can be a source of stress for many gardeners. Chewed plants with jagged edges, particularly on fruits and vegetables or the buds, leaves and stems of woody plants, can indicate that deer have invaded your garden. Rabbits are likely the culprit if you find your succulent leaves, shoots, or flowers are nibbles, or if tender young growth has been chewed to the ground. Damage to trees can also indicate a visit from these critters—male deer will often gouge tree limbs to polish their antlers, and rabbits will strip bark from young trees and shrubs. Fortunately, there are a few ways to prevent these uninvited guests:

Repellant Products: There are a wide variety of sprays and granules that can be used to repel deer and rabbits. There are also products which release sounds and scents that deter these animals from your garden.

Barriers: There are many easy alternatives to installing fencing if deer and rabbits are getting into your garden. Methods such as caging your tree saplings until they're older and more naturally resistant, using fabric covers on your vegetables, and using clear mesh netting on your ornamentals could be enough to keep out animals. Using a single strand of clear fish line as a makeshift fence around your garden could also confuse animals and keep them out.

Resistant Planting: Unfortunately, deer appetites vary by region and over time, and there is no such thing as a deer-proof plant. However, there are plant choices that are more and less likely to be damaged by deer and rabbits in our area; notable plants have been listed below.

Shrubs

- *Beberis* – Barberry
- *Buddleia* – Butterfly bush
- *Buxus* – Boxwood
- *Caryopteris x clandonensis* – Caryopteris
- *Forsythia* – Forsythia
- *Gaultheria procumbens* – Creeping Wintergreen
- *Hibiscus syriacus* – Rose of Sharon
- *Ilex glabra* – Inkberry
- *Juniperus chinensis* – Chinese Juniper
- *Leucothoe* – Leucothoe
- *Nandina* – Heavenly bamboo
- *Osmanthus* – Holly Osmanthus
- *Philadelphus* – Mock orange
- *Pieris japonica* – Japanese Andromeda
- *Potentilla* - Potentilla
- *Prunus laurocerasus* – Cherry laurel
- *Spirea* – Spirea
- *Syringa* - Lilac
- *Viburnum* – Viburnum
- *Weigela florida* – Old fashioned Weigela
- *Yucca* – Yucca

Annuals, Bulbs, and Herbs

- Ageratum
- Begonia
- Canna
- Chrysanthemum
- Common dill
- Daffodil
- Hyacinth
- Lantana
- Lavender
- Marigold
- Mint
- Nicotiana
- Oregano
- Rosemary
- Snapdragon
- Sweet alyssum
- Thyme
- Zinnia



Perennials

- *Acanthus spinosus* – Bear’s breeches
- *Achillea* - Yarrow
- *Aconitum* - Monkshood
- *Actaea* - Snakeroot
- *Agastache* – Hyssop
- *Ajuga* – Bugle weed
- *Alechemilla mollis* – Lady’s mantle
- *Anenome x hybrid* – Japanese anemone
- *Aquilegia* – Columbine
- *Arabis* – Rockcress
- *Armeria* – Sea thrift
- *Artemisia* – Wormwood
- *Aster* - Aster
- *Astilbe* – False Spirea
- *Aubrieta deltoidea* - Rockcress
- *Aurinia saxatilis* – Basket of Gold
- *Baptista* – False Indigo
- *Bergenia* – Berginia
- *Brunnera* – Siberian bugloss
- *Calamintha* - Calamint
- *Ceratostigma* - Plumbago
- *Chelone* – Turtlehead
- *Chrysogonum* – Golden knee
- *Cimicifuga racemosa* - Snakeroot
- *Convallaria* – Lily of the Valley
- *Coreopsis* - Tickseed
- *Crocsmia* – Montbretia
- *Dianthus* – Pinks
- *Dicentra spectabilis* – Bleeding Heart
- *Digitalis* – Foxglove
- *Echinacea* - Coneflower
- *Epimedium* - Barrenwort
- *Euphorbia* - Spurge
- *Galium* – Sweet woodruff
- *Geranium* - Geranium
- *Helenium* - Sneezeweed
- *Helleborus* – Lenten Rose
- *Hibiscus* – Hardy Hibiscus
- *Hypericum* – St. John’s Wort
- *Iris* - Iris
- *Kniphofia* – Red Hot Poker
- *Lamium* – Dead Nettle
- *Lamiastrum* – Yellow archangel
- *Liatris* – Blazing star
- *Ligularia* – Leopard plant
- *Lobelia* – Cardinal flower
- *Lupinus* - Lupine
- *Lychnis* – Catchfly
- *Mondara* – Bee Balm

- *Nepeta* – Catmint
- *Pachysandra terminalis* – Japanese spurge
- *Paeonia* – Garden peony
- *Papaver orientale* – Oriental poppy
- *Perovskia* – Russian sage
- *Platycodon* – Balloon flower
- *Pulmonaria* – Lungwort
- *Rudbeckia* – Black Eyed Susan
- *Salvia* - Sage
- *Santolina* – Lavender cotton
- *Scabiosa* – Pincushion flower
- *Sempervivum* – House leek
- *Stachys* – Lamb’s ear
- *Tiarella cordiflora* – Foam flower
- *Tradescantia* – Spider lily
- *Tropaelum majus* - Nasturium
- *Verbena* - Verbena
- *Veronica* – Speedwell

Grasses and Ferns

- *Acorus* – Sweet flag
- *Carex* – Sedge
- *Calamagrostis* – Feather reed grass
- *Chasmanthium* – Northern sea oats
- *Cortaderia* – Pampas grass
- *Dryopteris marginalis* – Wood fern
- *Festuca* - Fescue
- *Hakonechloa* – Japanese forest grass
- *Matteuccia struthiopteris* – Ostrich fern
- *Miscanthus* - Eulalia
- *Onoclea sensibilis* – Sensitive fern
- *Ophiopogon* – Mondo grass
- *Osmunda regalis* – Royal fern
- *Panicum* – Switch grass
- *Pennisetum* – Fountain grass

Trees

- *Betula nigra* – Birch
- *Chamaecyparis japonica* – Japanese False Cypress
- *Cornus florida* – Flowering Dogwood
- *Cornus kousa* – Korean Dogwood
- *Cryptomeria* – Japanese Cedar
- *Gledistia triacanthos* – Honey Locust
- *Ilex opaca* – American Holly
- *Ilex x aquipernyi* ‘Dragon Lady’ – Dragon Lady Holly
- *Picea abies* – Norway Spruce
- *Picea glauca* – White Spruce
- *Salix* - Willow

