

*How to Deter  
Deer From the*

# EDIBLE GARDEN

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# How to Deter Deer from Your Edible Garden



Deer can be a huge problem for many rural gardeners – and they often make their way into urban centres, as well. A small herd can easily decimate the entire edible garden in just a few short minutes. During the wintertime, they will often strip the bark from fruit trees, which can girdle the trees and possibly lead to the death of the plant. While many gardeners attempt to seek out plants that deer will not eat, the truth is that if they are hungry enough, deer will chow down on pretty much any plant in your garden. Try these tips to keep the hoofed ungulates from ruining your hopes of an excellent harvest.



# Deer Deterrents

Fences are the best way to keep deer out of your yard. The fence needs to be tall enough so that they cannot leap over it. Many gardeners opt for double row fences, which feature two parallel fences positioned sufficiently apart to scare the deer from attempting to jump.

Harvest fruit trees as soon as the fruit is ripe enough to pick. Don't leave fallen apples or other fruit on the ground.

Odour can be an effective weapon in the fight to keep deer out of the garden. Wrap a bar of extremely fragrant soap in plastic (to keep it from producing lather when wet) and then place it into a bag made from an old pair of nylons or a piece of tulle or burlap fabric. Hang the soap on the branches of fruit trees about 120 cm (47 inches) off the ground. Fabric softener sheets torn into strips may also be tied onto plants or fences; the scent may discourage deer from approaching, and the flapping of the cloth in the wind may scare them as well. Some gardeners like to use blood meal or fish emulsion fertilizers, as the unpleasant odours may keep deer from approaching. (As a bonus, these products also provide a small amount of nutrients for garden plants). You can purchase deer repellent products made of ingredients such as eggs, meat and fish meal, and garlic oil to spray in areas surrounding edible plants. (Do not use these products on the plants themselves).

If you have newly-planted fruit trees, be sure to place wire mesh guards made of chicken wire or hardware cloth around the trunks to prevent deer from browsing in the winter. The guards should be the height of the length of the tree trunk for best results.

Deer need to feel comfortable and safe to enjoy the buffet in your yard. Try frightening them away with water sprinklers rigged to motion sensors. Raid your recycling bin and hang noisy mobiles made from empty soup cans on trees. Set up lights rigged to motion sensors in various locations in the yard, to scare them at dusk and into the night.

Finally, the scent and presence of a dog in the garden and yard may quickly drive deer away; allow your pet to patrol and you may have fewer deer to contend with.



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