

ANIMAL PESTS LIBRARY

EPIC ENVIRO PROTECTION
INDUSTRIES COMPANY, INC.



Compiled by EPICrepellents.com

Whitetails, Blacktails and Mule Deer

Wintertime's Triple-Threat for American Gardeners

No matter where deer are found in North America, individual deer survival through winter depends a lot upon how well the deer prepares for winter's "drought" of foods. And their winter survival tactics are no more evident than in your gardens and yards right now!

Woodland mast crops -- such as acorns, sumac peas, beechnuts and locust pods -- that were in abundance just a few short weeks ago are now growing scarce, hidden beneath matted leaves and seasonal snowfall. As a result, the deer have added your ornamental shrubs, trees and cold-weather vegetable gardens to their wintertime menu. Your prized plants represent cold-season cold-cuts that could attract deer from as much as 50 miles away! Among the most likely congregation areas will be yards, gardens and agriculture fields on south-facing slopes where sunshine is abundant.

If you have had foraging deer damage your shrubs, gardens and trees during the warm months of the year, rest assured deer will return to your property in the fall months. In most cases, suburban homeowners are no threat to deer. Deer often won't run unless chased. They learn the limits of controlled dogs, and they even learn the noises associated with those who feed deer. Preventing damage by foraging deer is easier than breaking the pattern of deer foraging after it starts. Once they adapt to your garden, one deer expert says, they adopt it.

Perhaps no deer barrier is more effective than a fence. But deer can easily clear fences as high as 6 feet. That's an expensive fence, no matter the material it's made of, and the cost of building that fence is compounded by the length of the barrier. Imagine building a fence 6 feet high to encompass a yard 2 acres or more in size!

So, how do you begin a winter-season plan to protect your valuable flowers, shrubs, and trees from foraging deer? Initiate your plan now, using the strength of a deterrent program that stops deer from entering your flowerbeds, gardens and even your yard!

1. Learn where deer eat. Deer prefer to feed in open areas near cover. Clear-cuts, parks and suburban neighborhoods are the perfect habitat, where rich mixtures of vegetation produce abundant food and cover. They're easily attracted to areas of open lawns, succulent summer gardens and plentiful ornamental shrubs where patches of forest cover stand nearby. Deer frequently feed on flowers, fruits and vegetables and the buds and twigs of fruit trees and ornamental shrubs.

2. Identify the damage. You can distinguish the damage caused to plants by feeding deer by the ragged, broken ends of branches of plants and trees that have been browsed by deer, which do not have incisor teeth.

3. Assault their sense of security. While deer are herd animals, bucks are rarely seen with does. Does, fawns and yearlings, however, are very social, congregational, even predictable animals. Individually, their nose will lead them to return over and over again to areas where food is tasty, abundant and safe to forage. Their nose

will also alert deer to nearby danger. Disrupt their sense of security and you've achieved the primary factor for turning deer away from your valuable plants, gardens, shrubs and trees.

Deer are creatures of habit. Once they've found a food source, they'll return to that food source. And at no other time of year are deer most likely to return to yards, gardens and grain fields to feed than during the winter. That's why it's important now to prevent damage by foraging deer. Breaking that pattern, once it is established, is one of the hardest tasks gardeners face. Once deer adapt to your garden, one deer expert says, they adopt it. Act now and your chances this winter are good for protecting your prized trees, shrubs and gardens from foraging deer.

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