
Deer--A "Nuisance" Animal?



In most cases, the presence of a "nuisance animal" is just the "effect" half of a "cause and effect" scenario. The "cause" half is where our answers lie and is almost invariably a food source or an attractive habitat. The trick is to fix the *cause*. Merely removing animals doesn't work—as long as attractants remain, more animals from the surrounding area will simply take their place.

A better approach is to modify the habitat so it provides less food and shelter, which in turn encourages the animals to go elsewhere.

There's a Fawn in My Yard!

If deer visit your property throughout the year, don't be surprised if you discover a fawn curled up, much like a sleeping cat, close to your house during May and June. This fawn is not abandoned and does not need your help. Its mother is nearby and will return to nurse it a few times a day.

Lyme Disease Misconception

White-tailed deer are not the only species to host the ticks that carry Lyme disease. Therefore, the removal of this one host does not stop the spread of the disease.

Avoiding Deer-Vehicle Collisions

As a motorist, you can take the following steps to avoid collisions with deer:

- 🦌 **Be vigilant:** Watch from side to side, especially in areas of low visibility or where roadside shrubs or grasses are close to the road.
- 🦌 **Watch for groups:** Deer tend to travel in groups. If one deer crosses the road, watch for more to follow.
- 🦌 **Be aware of seasons:** Autumn is mating and hunting season, so bucks are on the move. From May through June, yearlings are seeking new territories.
- 🦌 **Be aware of time of day:** Deer are most active at dawn and dusk.
- 🦌 **Use high beams:** At night, use your high beams to see farther ahead. Slow down and watch for the eye-shine of deer near the road edges.
- 🦌 **Drive straight:** If at all possible, do not swerve to avoid wildlife but brake firmly. Swerving may cause deer to run into the vehicle rather than away from it.



Want to Learn More?

A big "thank you" to The Fund for Animals for providing the information in this pamphlet. For more details about deer, including deer-resistant plants, repellents, and fencing options, visit The Fund for Animals web site at www.fund.org and link to their Coexisting with Wildlife Fact Sheet #7, Living with Deer.

Mercer County Wildlife Center



Coexisting with Deer



White-tailed deer have adapted extremely well to our human-created environments—perhaps too well.

P.O. Box 161
Titusville, NJ 08560
(609) 883-6606

www.mercercounty.org/mcwc/mcwc.htm



Coexisting with Deer

The best ways to get along with the deer that share our territories include:

- 🦌 Planting deer-resistant plants
- 🦌 Applying repellents
- 🦌 Using scare devices
- 🦌 Erecting fences
- 🦌 Installing wildlife warning reflectors along roads

Plantings, repellents, and scare devices tend to work better for *low to moderate* browsing problems; fencing works better for *severe* problems. It is important to analyze your deer situation before choosing a deterrent.

Deer-Resistant Plants

Deer taste buds vary geographically and seasonally, and are largely dependent on what alternative plants are available. Check your local garden store or nursery for information about what types of plants seem resistant in your area. You can also contact your local Cooperative Extension Service for this information (in New Jersey, it's the Rutgers Cooperative Extension at www.rce.rutgers.edu).

For a list of the plants—annuals and biennials, ground covers and vines, perennials and bulbs, and shrubs and trees—that deer

avoid, as well as those they seem to prefer, visit The Fund for Animals web site at www.fund.org.

Repellents

Repellents are products that are applied to or near plants in an attempt to disrupt and reduce deer browsing. The effectiveness of repellents varies and depends on a number of factors:

- 🦌 Seasonal changes in plant palatability
- 🦌 Local deer taste preferences and nutritional needs
- 🦌 Availability of alternative foods
- 🦌 Time of year
- 🦌 Deer density
- 🦌 Type of repellent and concentration of active ingredients
- 🦌 Durability of the repellent and how often it is applied

Homemade Deer Repellent

Blend together 2 cups of water, 5 cloves of garlic, 1 cup of chopped onions, and 5 tablespoons of powdered hot pepper. Pour into a covered container and let stand for 24 hours.

Strain and mix with 1 gallon of water. Apply to plants with a sprayer.

The most effective repellents tend to be those that produce sulfurous odors and are considered “fear-inducing.” These repellents depend completely on detection through odor. It is believed that deer associate a sulphur smell with the presence (or carnage) of a predator. Other repellents include those that taste bitter or that cause irritation on contact, such as those that contain hot pepper.

Scare Devices

Another way to deter deer is to scare them. However, deer tend to habituate to most scare devices over time. Some devices include:

- 🦌 Scarecrow motion-activated sprinkler
- 🦌 Havahart #5250 “Electronic Deer Repellent”
- 🦌 Ultrasonic devices

Fencing

Fencing options include:

- 🦌 Electric fences
- 🦌 Woven wire fencing or plastic mesh
- 🦌 Seedling protectors (tubes that surround seedlings)

For more details about these fencing options, see The Fund for Animals Fact Sheet #7, *Living With Deer*.