

# Preventing Animal Pests



With the large amount of urban construction in our communities, many animals have been coerced into closer contact with humans and must compete with us for shelter and space. With a little understanding, a few precautions and some common sense steps, we can all enjoy the wonderfully interesting wild animals who share our backyards and cities.

## Who is eating my garden and how can I prevent this?

Gardens are especially attractive to wildlife because they offer an accessible food source. Prior to attempting any deterrent it's important to determine what type of animal is damaging the garden. Animals leave behind clues to their identity and you can use them to figure out who is visiting.

- Ragged, torn twigs and leftover vegetation indicate a deer.
- Neatly clipped ends of twigs and vegetation indicate the presence of rabbits.
- Small, pea-shaped droppings in the area are also an indication of rabbits.

Once you have determined which animals are eating the garden, you can undertake some simple steps to prevent the activity.

## Fences

Physical barriers may be set up so that certain animals cannot access the garden. You may have to place the fence a few inches into the ground so that animals cannot sneak under the fence. Obviously, the height of the fence would need to be greater to exclude deer than to exclude rabbits. Hardwire mesh works best.



## Covers for Vegetables

Plant covers are also successful at keeping most animals from consuming garden plants. Covers can be purchased or you can make your own by cutting the bottom out of a milk or pop jug and placing it over the plant. To protect larger plants place a net over them. For fruit trees, large nets can be purchased which cover the whole top of the tree to protect the fruit from birds and wild animals. To protect tree trunks from wild animals, coiled tree wraps can be purchased and wrapped around the trunks to a height of about two to three feet.



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### Scare devices

These devices are most useful when dealing with rabbits, groundhogs, skunks and raccoons. Effective scare devices include the ScareCrow motion activated sprinklers (controls many animals), Mole Mover (gophers, moles, voles) and owl statues, reflective scare tape or aluminum plates for birds.

Note: Any deterrent method you use may need to be changed from time to time as animals adapt and become accustomed to noises and motion. Scare devices must remain novel and strange in order to be effective.

### Sprays/Solutions

**Skoot** - Effective for repelling rabbits, deer and mice, Skoot is a bitter tasting solution that will repel animals by taste. It is either painted onto trunks of trees, or diluted and sprayed on plants. The active ingredient is Thiram, which is actually a common fungicide.



**Plantskydd** - Originally developed in Sweden by the forestry industry (the name in Swedish actually means 'plant protection'). Not only were forestry officials seeking a long lasting product, but their strict environmental laws meant it had to be 100% natural. The product emits an odour that animals associate with predator activity; this fear keeps animals from even coming near the area. It is one of the longest lasting repellents; the vegetable

oil 'binder' means the product sticks to leaves up to 6 months. The active ingredient is bloodmeal, so if used during the growing season, it actually works as a foliar fertilizer too.

Listed to repel deer, moose, elk, rabbits, squirrels, voles and other rodents. The website [www.treeworld.com](http://www.treeworld.com) lists many testimonials to the product's effectiveness.



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