

# Detering Unwanted Guests in the Garden



The location and area surrounding your garden will determine the different kinds of unwanted guests you may (or may not) see visiting your garden. Lets focus on the larger ones such as deer, rabbits, rodents and birds. Our gardens often become a buffet for these unwanted guests and it is a challenge to deter them from feasting on our future harvest. If anyone should be feasting out of our gardens, it's us!

## Identifying the Unwanted Guest



### Deer:

- Often trample crops
- Leave ragged, broken ends on plants they have been snacking on.
- In the spring, they enjoy seedlings, shoots, and the flowering parts of plants.

### Rodents and Rabbits:

- Leave non-uniform gnaw marks.



- Rabbit gnaw marks are larger than a rodents and are more distinct.
- The tell-tale sign of rabbits feasting: twigs clipped at a 45 degree angle.
- Damage can also occur during the winter months when food sources are scarce and rabbits resort to girdling the bark of trees.



### Birds:

- Can be more challenging to identify.
- Usually cause holes, slashes or pecks into fruit.
- Of course, you may also catch them in the act of eating and/or knocking fruit off bushes and trees.

## **Deterring Unwanted Guests:**

How do we stop these unwanted guests from helping themselves in our gardens? There are a few different approaches, depending on the unwanted guest. For the backyard or community gardener, let's look at simple methods.

### **Deer:**

- Mix a dozen eggs with 5 gallons of water and apply to the area of concern. Humans can't smell the rotting eggs, but deer can and this is what keeps them away.
- A mixture of half bone meal and half bloodmeal (available from garden centres) hung in bags around the garden deter deer and rabbits.
- Other common practices are hanging heavily scented bars of soap left in their wrappers, human hair in perforated nylon stocking,

### **Rodents and Rabbits:**

- Soil tillage removes cover and destroys runway-burrow systems. This can decrease rodent populations in perennial crops.
- Mowing, cutting brush, removing brush piles and overgrown areas of vegetation will remove protective coverage for rabbits.
- Spiral plastic and galvanized wire mesh buried at least 6 inches below the soil and reaching 20 inches high protect the base of trees against rodents and rabbits.

### **Birds:**

- Try to take notice what time of day birds are visiting because that will influence which options to pursue. It's best to use a couple different (visual, auditory) methods and vary the type and location of each.
- Scarecrows and bird models are most effective when used before birds develop a feeding habit at a specific site. They need to be lifelike, have motion, be highly visible and moved frequently.
- Mirrors place in the garden can also be a deterrent and work best when it's sunny out.
- Netting remains the most complete and effective method to reducing damage caused by birds.

*information extracted from:*

<http://onvegetables.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/deer-control-in-horticulture-crops-factsheet-final.pdf>

<http://onvegetables.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/managing-bird-damage-in-crops-factsheet-final.pdf>

<http://onvegetables.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/rodent-deterrent-factsheet-final.pdf>