

## Keeping Deer at Bay

I don't know about you but I find it extremely disheartening to discover the daylily blooms I have waited all spring to enjoy disappearing in the blink of an eye courtesy of our Settles Bridge deer population. Oriental lilies, tulips and the ever popular pansy have succumbed to the ever hungry Bambi. I remember our second year here the deer managed to devour my entire Hosta collection in one night!

I've combed every gardening book and/or magazine looking for deterrents. Some have worked. Most have not. Below is a compilation of products that may assist you in deterring the deer in your own yard.

- **Blood Meal** - one of the cheapest readily available products out there. Not only is blood meal not liked by deer but it is a good fertilizer for your plants. A box will cost you about \$2 and is available at home improvement, hardware, garden center and the ever present Walmart type stores. The key to blood meal working is to regularly sprinkle the product on the plants you want to protect. If it rains, reapply. I have found that weekly applications work well unless we have a heavy rain.
- **Deer Off** – a more expensive product but highly effective. Deer Off is normally available at garden centers. A ready to use bottle will run you \$7 up. I have found buying the product in concentrate and mixing my own is more economical. The solution is sprayed upon the foliage you are trying to protect from deer grazing. It has never harmed my plants and tends to hold up well to rain. Spraying a few days a week works well.
- **Coyote Urine** – a very expensive but highly effective product. I have yet to get an answer from the company as to how they manage to cultivate coyote urine in large quantities and turn it into powder. ☺ The product is available at Northside Gardens and costs \$15.59 for a 20 oz. container. Conservatively sprinkle the product in areas you are trying to protect. It holds up well to rain and needs only a weekly application. Hold your nose folks. This stuff stinks!
- **Good 'ole un-neutered dog urine** – a free and high effective product if you happen to have a dog that is not neutered. If you aren't lucky enough to have the dog, ask a neighbor who does. I have not found the urine of my female dog nor my neutered dog to keep deer at bay. However, they seem to steer far clear of my property when I allow my un-neutered puppy to "mark" the perimeter of my property.
- **Catmint** – surround your most prized deer loved plants with this wonderful perennial. Deer do not like catmint at all and I have found that using this product in the front of the border keeps them out of those particular gardens. The bonus here is that catmint is an outstanding perennial that blooms strongly all spring and

summer and comes back year after year. “Walker’s Low” is a wonderful smaller sized variety and for a larger type choose “Six Hills Giant”.

- **Homemade Deer Repellant** – below is a do-it-yourself concoction that you may want to mix up. I can’t attest to its effectiveness having not used it yet but I do intend to give it a try.

4 tablespoons cayenne pepper  
1 cup white vinegar  
½ cup peeled garlic  
1 cup clear ammonia  
1 cup Murphy’s oil soap  
1 bar ivory soap (optional)

Boil the cayenne in the vinegar for 2 minutes. Strain it thru a coffee filter. In a blender puree the garlic in 2 cups of water. Strain the mixture thru another coffee filter. Combine the two liquids with the ammonia and oil soap in a 3 gallon garden sprayer and fill the sprayer with water. Spray the product on foliage you want to protect and reapply weekly. Floating the bar of soap in the sprayer will allow for extra stickiness. (Courtesy of Fine Gardening Magazine.)

Good luck!

Kerri McCoy  
SBHA Secretary