



DO YOU HAVE A DEER PROBLEM?

The information below will help you address many of the problems caused by deer in Willowick as well as provide you with the options available to you in Willowick to address these situations. The city and Division of Wildlife believe in giving as many options as possible to the residents to deal with their problem while taking into consideration the highly residential nature of Willowick while understanding the level of importance to some of the residents regarding deer problems within the city.

Garden Damage

Deer look for easy sources of food and city gardens offer a buffet of food to them. However, oftentimes the solution to garden damage by deer is a quick and easy process. Since within the city most gardens are relatively small, the Division of Wildlife suggests that you install a 3-4 foot barrier (vinyl, hardware cloth, etc.) with the first foot of the barrier underground to keep out small critters like raccoons, skunks, and groundhogs (Figures 1 and 2). On the corners of the garden install posts that reach 7 feet off the ground. You can then run a single string or wire every 1 1/2 feet to achieve a higher barrier. Run the top line at the top of your tall corner posts. Periodically hang ribbon (or better yet aluminum pie pans to scare off the birds) to act as a visual to the deer that the lines are there. Deer have poor depth perception and they will not jump between the hard fence and the wires. In addition the top wire appears too tall for them to want to jump over.

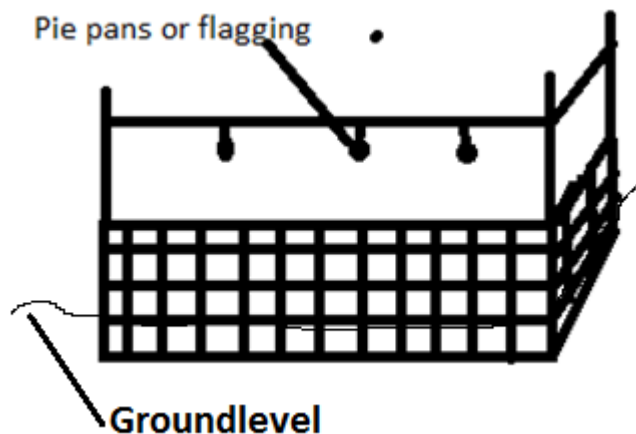


Figure 1



Figure 2 (credit: stumelia.blogspot.com)

Another option is to use the concepts of the above mentioned fence but to utilize electric fence in its place. Figure 3 shows how you can accomplish a barrier for various wildlife causing garden damage including deer. You will notice the multiple lines of wire at the bottom act as the "solid" barrier equivalent to the vinyl/hardware cloth of the above mentioned fence. Maintenance with an electric fence is a must to ensure that the grass beneath the wires does not touch the wires. Contact between the two will cause the fence to no longer work. Electric fence also allows you the ability to turn on or to turn off the charge depending on the activities in the yard. You can even place a timer to allow the fence to be active from dusk to dawn coordinating with the primary times when deer are moving around looking for a bite to eat.



Figure 3

Landscape Damage

Deer looking for a bite to eat will often find your landscaping a palatable option. Oftentimes using the "peanut butter fence" technique (Figures 4 and 5) will go a long way to keeping deer off of the plants you work so hard to maintain. The "peanut butter fence" is an electric fence wire strung about 2 1/2 feet off of the ground with a piece of foil or aluminum flashing wrapped over the line with peanut butter smeared on it. When the deer approaches the landscaping, the smell of the peanut butter attracts the deer to lick it thereby giving a non-lethal shock to the deer on their tongue. Simply using an electric fence wire without the peanut butter "flags" will typically not work since the hair on deer is hollow thereby acting as an insulator for the deer and not allowing the shock to be fully felt. As soon as the deer start eating a particular plant (or better yet in anticipation as particular plants begin to grow), install the "peanut butter fence" around that section of landscaping. Because various plants will grow/bloom at different times of the year, you will need to move the "peanut butter fence" to the area the deer are browsing at that particular time of year. The parts for this technique can usually be purchased at farm supply stores such as Tractor Supply Company or online at www.premier1supplies.com. If you are putting this up as a permanent barrier it is suggested to use three lines as shown in Figure 5.

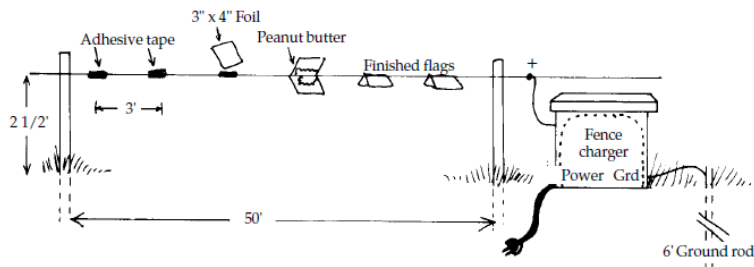


Figure 4

Flagging with
Peanut Butter



Figure 5

Another technique is to use various sprays to deter the deer from eating your plants. Keep in mind that if a deer is hungry enough and the deterrent is not strong enough, they may still eat your plants. In addition you will need to reapply to the particular plant they are eating several times to get the deer to stop eating it or as rain/water rinses the product off the plant. You can also use ground cayenne pepper obtained at a bulk food store to deter deer from plants. Spray the plants with some water and then generously dust the plants with the cayenne pepper. The hotter you make the plant the less likely the deer will eat it. A list of several products on the market can be found in the Division of Wildlife publication <https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/ohiodnr.gov/documents/wildlife/wildlife-management/Deer%20Damage%20Control%20pub138.pdf>. It may also be a good idea if you grow your own garden to plant some hotter pepper plants such as habanero or some of the ghost peppers. You can harvest, dry, and grind them for your own homemade pepper spray. This will be much hotter than the cayenne pepper and will do a better job of deterring the deer.

Finally, in areas where you regularly have deer causing damage it is recommended to choose plants that tend to be less palatable to the deer. There are several decorative ornamentals that fit in this category. A list of some common plants to select can be found in the Division of Wildlife publication https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/ohiodnr.gov/documents/wildlife/wildlife-management/NATIVE_OHIO_PLANTS_THAT_ARE_DEER_RESISTENT.pdf. Keep in mind that there is no plant that deer "will never eat". If a deer is hungry enough they will even eat plants that are hard to chew and digest or that tastes bad. However, at times this is all it takes for the deer to go looking for some better food elsewhere.

Tree Rubbing Damage

Tree rubbing (often called buck rubs) occur when either a buck is shedding the "velvet" off of their antlers or they are marking territory. There are three easy ways to address tree rubbing. The first (figure 6) is to install a fence around the tree(s) you want to protect. A good rule of thumb is to have the fence 3-4 feet away from the trunk of the tree. You can also elevate the fence several inches to make it easy to maintain the grass for aesthetic purposes. Also, making the mulch bed the same distance away from the trunk will help make maintenance of the area much easier for you. The second (figure 7) is to install a triangle of posts around the trunk of the tree. Male deer will typically not rub their antlers on metal, but if they do the rubbing will be on the post and not your tree. Both of these techniques are only needed from September 1st to January 31st and can be removed the remainder of the year.



Figure 6



Figure 7

The third technique is to use rigid tree bark protectors (Figures 8 and 9) which you can purchase at any home improvement store or by doing a quick search online. Usually using protectors rather than wrappings will provide better results. Use these from where the trunk of the tree meets the ground up about 4 feet. These protect the tree if the deer would attempt to rub on it. In addition, this technique offers trees (especially young trees) protection from squirrels, rabbits, and rodents from chewing the bark which can kill the tree as well. If you use this method, it is recommended to keep the tubing on from at least October 1st to April 1st. However, these can be left on year round if you wish. Once the tree begins to outgrow the tree bark protector, usually when the tree reaches 4 inches in diameter, make sure to remove it so that it doesn't harm the tree as the tree grows. By that time the tree will be large enough that most deer will avoid rubbing the it.



Figure 8



Figure 9

Deer Vehicle Accidents



The best way to avoid deer collisions with your vehicle is to be watchful not only for deer crossing the road but also for the driver in front of you that may slam on the brakes to avoid hitting a deer. While deer can and will move throughout the day, their primary movement times are at sunrise and sunset. Particular attention should be paid during the peak breeding season in October and November as well as the peak birthing season from April to June. These are the times you should be extra vigilant in watching for deer along roadways. While hitting a deer can cause serious damage to your vehicle, you run a better chance of injuring yourself or someone else by swerving off of the road. Therefore, it is recommended to slow down if you see a deer crossing the road in front of you. If you need to quickly stop to avoid hitting a deer, hit your brakes while maintaining your vehicle in the lane in which you are driving. Remember, deer crossing signs are only placed in areas throughout the city that have been identified as areas where deer regularly cross the road. However, deer can cross in front of you on any road throughout the city.



Aggressiveness

While deer most times appear to be gentle animals, you must remember that they are wild animals that can be unpredictable. You should always give wild animals their space. If they feel threatened they can easily cause injuries to humans or pets. If you notice a deer approaching you, make noise and wave your hands so that the deer knows you are there. If the deer continues to approach you, get inside and contact the Willowick Police Department at (440) 585-1234.

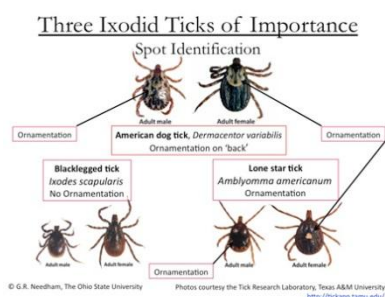
If you let pets outside, you should always scan the area prior to letting your pet out to ensure no deer are in the yard. Even dogs contained within a buried electric fence will chase after a deer potentially putting the pet at risk of getting hit by a car or getting lost. This is specifically important during the time of the year when does have fawns (May-July). Occasionally, a doe may perceive your dog as a threat to the fawn and may injure the dog while trying to protect the fawn from the perceived threat.

However, oftentimes normal deer behavior is confused with a deer acting aggressive. A normal deer reaction is to stomp the ground when they are unsure if something is a threat or not. It is not uncommon to walk outside only to



find a deer in the yard. You immediately stop often worried if the deer is a threat. As you stand still the deer will stomp the ground to try and get you to move to determine if you are a threat. As mentioned above, make noise and wave your hands so that the deer knows you are there. The deer should within a few seconds and with the flickering of its tail, turn and leave the area. Keep in mind that deer in cities regularly see and hear people and that it is not uncommon for urban deer to not run away when they see a person.

Lyme Disease



Lyme disease is often a concern for residents. Lyme disease is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. While the more common ticks encountered by people are the American dog ticks, only the blacklegged ticks can transmit Lyme Disease. One advantage of living in a city is that in most cases lawns are well manicured. Ticks tend to prefer areas of taller grass so maintaining your yard for shorter grass will help in deterring ticks from using your property. Deer are not directly involved with Lyme disease transmission. However, they are the preferred host of the adult blacklegged tick. If you happen to get a tick embedded on you, don't panic. The following will assist you in removing it.

How to remove a tick

<https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/after-a-tick-bite/>

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you are unable to remove the mouth easily with clean tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
3. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub, or soap and water.
4. Dispose of a live tick by submersing it in alcohol, placing it in a sealed bag/container, wrapping it tightly in tape, or flushing it down the toilet. Never crush a tick with your fingers.

Avoid folklore remedies such as "painting" the tick with nail polish or petroleum jelly, or using heat to make the tick detach from the skin. Your goal is to remove the tick as quickly as possible--not waiting for it to detach.

If you develop a rash or fever within several weeks of removing a tick, see your doctor. Be sure to tell the doctor about your recent tick bite, when the bite occurred, and where you most likely acquired the tick.

More information about ticks in Ohio and the current status of blacklegged ticks please visit the Ohio Department of Health's website at <https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/zoonotic-disease-program/diseases/lyme-disease>.

Feeding Deer

The City of Willowick Ordinance 505.19 does not allow the feeding of deer. The ordinance states: No person shall purposely place any edible item in an manner or position where such edible item shall be accessible to attract common pigeons, crows, blackbirds; other large, flocking, wild non-game birds; nuisance animals, including but not limited to feral cats and dogs, squirrels, raccoons, groundhogs, and deer; wild animals; domestic pets; or vermin. This section shall not apply to animals owned by or in the continued possession of that person.

The provisions of this section shall not apply to the feeding of squirrels or small birds, with the exception of pigeons, from a commercial stationary squirrel or bird feeder or container for food located in the rear yard elevated at least sixty (60) inches above the ground level and of such design and construction as to minimize any potential for food and/or seed from spilling and/or dropping to the ground. The number of commercial feeders or containers shall be limited to a maximum total of three (3). In no event shall any stationary feeder or container be less than five (5) feet from the boundary line of any adjacent property owner.



Do I Have an Orphaned Fawn



During the birthing season for deer (April –June) it is not uncommon to find fawns laying in backyards throughout the city. Often it may appear that the fawn is orphaned. However, this is usually not the case. In fact, it is a remarkable defense tactic deer used to protect the fawn. A fawn is born scentless so hanging around “mom” will attract predators such as coyotes making the fawns vulnerable. Lying motionless with no scent affords them the best opportunity to not be found by predators. Never put bowls of food or water near them as that may attract the predators and give away their hiding spot. The best thing you can do is to leave the fawn alone. Usually by the next morning the doe will have moved the fawn to a new area, again aiding in protection from the fawn being detected by a predator. Keep in mind it is never a good practice to handle wildlife and in the case of fawns, you might actually put the fawn at risk of predators.

Use the techniques mentioned above to help alleviate the specific problem. Additional information can be found at <https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/wildlife-management/nuisance-wildlife/nuisance-deer> or on the Division of Wildlife website at www.wildohio.com.

If the techniques mentioned above are not working, contact the Division of Wildlife at (330) 644-2293. Oftentimes they can identify the reason over the phone as to why the technique is not working and can give site-specific advice to further help alleviate the deer problems on your property.