



## Deterring Rabbits : Possible Strategies

Rabbits usually nest in a dense thicket of brush, field edges, thick landscaping, or overgrown junk piles. They are omnivores and populations may vary in their feeding preferences even from one yard to the next. They will feed on any greenery in the landscape, especially new green growth and buds in the spring. Look for a clean, angled cut on the end of leaves and stems. Rabbits also may damage older trunk tissue of shrubs and woody perennials, removing some of or all the bark, girdling trunks and stems several feet from the ground. In comparison, voles will girdle plants at soil level, groundhogs will burrow with their curved claws, and squirrels and chipmunks will cause damage by uprooting plants and bulbs. Because rabbits usually forage only at dawn and dusk, identification may be dependent on analyzing damage done. In addition, they do not hibernate, so trees and shrubs must be protected year-round.

### Finding a Plan of Action

- Rabbits are difficult to control. The best way to minimize damage from rabbits is to make sure that all suitable habitats are removed. Clean up any junk piles, brushy areas, abandoned containers and overgrown vegetation. Check under low decks and look for nesting holes and burrows below and behind shrubs as well as in the lawn. Once the rabbits have been flushed out of a known habitat, fill in holes and add chicken wire around decks and other vulnerable areas to make sure another rabbit does not move in.
- Garden areas may be fenced in with wire mesh or plastic sheeting. The fence should be at least two feet tall and either secured tightly to the ground or buried in the soil a minimum of three inches. Bending the underground wire mesh outward will help. Fences can be temporarily used when plants are most susceptible to damage, or as a permanent installation. Similarly, small mesh hardware cloth may be used as a cylindrical wrap around young trees or plants, keeping it far enough away from the trunk so rabbits cannot feed through the holes.
- Installing automatic sprinklers with a motion sensor may work to repel rabbits. Live traps should be placed close to existing habitats or near feeding sources. Use corn cobs, peanut butter, apples, or rabbit droppings to lure rabbits.
- Animal repellent foliar sprays should be applied directly on the leaf and stem of plants and around nests or shallow burrows to deter rabbits from using them. Peripheral spraying of your garden may also help to keep rabbits out.
- Repellents such as *Hinder* (check ingredients for *ammonium hydroxide* or *ammonium soaps of higher fatty-acids*) are the only type registered for food crops and work by forming an odor barrier. Liquid deterrents should be applied in the spring as new growth is appearing and may need to be applied after rain and during periods of rapid growth.
- Natural solutions such as Bobbex-R use protein taste/odor repellents such as putrescent eggs. These should be used only up to the flowering stage on food crops. It won't wash off but does need to be re-applied to new growth.
- Rabbits generally will not bother plants with spines or thorns; fuzzy, furry or rough textured foliage; milky sap; and those with succulent or thick, heavy leaves. They will also avoid plants with aromatic or strongly scented foliage such as herbs. When populations are high, however, rabbits may eat even these relatively unpalatable foods.

# Rabbit-Resistant Choices from Bowood Farms

*This is not a list of rabbit-proof plants, but suggestions of plants seldom damaged by rabbits.*

*Interplanting with these selections may also somewhat protect those plants which are more vulnerable.*

## Annuals / Tropicals

<i>Ageratum</i> /Floss Flower	<i>Lantana</i> /Lantana
<i>Begonia</i> /Begonia	<i>Mirabilis</i> /Four O'Clock
<i>Catharanthus</i> /Annual Vinca	<i>Pelargonium</i> /Geranium
<i>Cleome</i> /Spider Flower	<i>Verbena</i> /Verbena

## Bulbs / Rhizomes / Tubers

<i>Allium</i> /Ornamental Onion	<i>Iris</i> /Iris
<i>Hyacinth</i> /Hyacinth	<i>Narcissus</i> /Daffodil
<i>Hemerocallis</i> /Daylily	<i>Paeonia</i> /Peony

## Herbs

<i>Allium</i> /Chives	<i>Origanum maj</i> /Marjoram
<i>Artemisia</i> /Tarragon	<i>Petroselinum</i> /Parsley
<i>Calendula</i> /Pot Marigold	<i>Rosmarinus</i> /Rosemary
<i>Mentha</i> /Mint	<i>Satureja hort</i> /Summer Savory
<i>Ocimum</i> /Basil	<i>Satureja mont</i> /Winter Savory
<i>Origanum</i> /Oregano	<i>Teucrium</i> /Germander

## Groundcovers

<i>Ajuga</i> /Bugleweed	<i>Pachysandra</i> /Japanese Spurge
<i>Asarum can</i> /Wild Ginger	<i>Phlox stol</i> /Creeping Phlox
<i>Convallaria</i> /Lily of the Valley	<i>Pulsatilla</i> /Pasque Flower
<i>Hedera helix</i> /English Ivy	<i>Sedum</i> /Stonecrop
<i>Iberis</i> /Candytuft	<i>Stachys byz</i> /Lamb's Ears
<i>Liriope</i> /Monkey Grass	<i>Vinca</i> /Periwinkle

## Perennials

<i>Acanthus</i> /Bear's Breeches	<i>Helleborus</i> /Lenten Rose
<i>Achillea</i> /Yarrow	<i>Kniphofia</i> /Red Hot Poker
<i>Actaea</i> /Bugbane	<i>Lavandula</i> /Lavender
<i>Alcea</i> /Hollyhock	<i>Leucanthemum</i> /Shasta Daisy
<i>Alchemilla</i> /Lady's Mantle	<i>Lobelia card</i> /Cardinal Flower
<i>Anemone</i> /Japanese Anemone	<i>Mertensia</i> /Virginia Bluebells
<i>Aquilegia</i> /Columbine	<i>Monarda</i> /Bee Balm
<i>Artemisia</i> /Wormwood	<i>Nepeta</i> /Catmint
<i>Aruncus</i> /Goatsbeard	<i>Papaver</i> /Poppy
<i>Astilbe</i> /Astilbe	<i>Penstemon</i> /Beardtongue
<i>Baptisia</i> /False Indigo	<i>Perovskia</i> /Russian Sage
<i>Bergenia</i> /Pig Squeak	<i>Pulmonaria</i> /Lungwort
<i>Brunnera</i> /Siberian Bugloss	<i>Rudbeckia</i> /Black-eyed Susan
<i>Coreopsis</i> /Tickseed	<i>Salvia</i> /Flowering Sage
<i>Dicentra</i> /Bleeding Heart	<i>Sedum</i> /Autumn Stonecrop
<i>Digitalis</i> /Foxglove	<i>Solidago</i> /Goldenrod
<i>Epimedium</i> /Barrenwort	<i>Stachys off</i> /Betony
<i>Eupatorium coel</i> /Ageratum	<i>Stokesia</i> /Stokes' Aster
<i>Euphorbia</i> /Spurge	<i>Thalictrum</i> /Meadow Rue
<i>Ferns</i> /Except Maidenhair	<i>Tiarella</i> /Foam Flower
<i>Filipendula</i> /Queen of the Prairie	<i>Trachystemon</i> /Japanese Borage
<i>Gaillardia</i> /Blanket Flower	<i>Veronica</i> /Speedwell
<i>Geranium</i> /Cranesbill	<i>Yucca</i> /Yucca

## Trees / Shrubs / Vines

<i>Acer palm</i> /Japanese Maple	<i>Hydrangea anom</i> /Hydrangea Vine	<i>Picea pungens</i> /Colorado Spruce
<i>Aesculus parv</i> /Bottlebrush	<i>Hydrangea arb</i> /Smooth Hydrangea	<i>Pinus strobus</i> /Eastern White Pine
<i>Azalea</i> /Azalea	<i>Ilex glabra</i> /Inkberry Holly	<i>Potentilla</i> /Shrubby Cinquefoil
<i>Buddleia</i> /Butterfly Bush	<i>Juniperus</i> /Juniper	<i>Rhododendron</i> /Rhododendron
<i>Buxus</i> /Boxwood	<i>Kalmia</i> /Mountain Laurel	<i>Rhus</i> /Sumac
<i>Clematis</i> /Clematis	<i>Liriodendron</i> /Tulip Tree	<i>Spiraea</i> /Spirea
<i>Cornus alba</i> /Tatarian Dogwood	<i>Malva</i> /Mallow	<i>Taxus</i> /Yew
<i>Cotoneaster</i> /Cotoneaster	<i>Parthenocissus</i> /Virginia Creeper	<i>Vitis</i> /Grapevine

## A Final Thought – (very much) Outside the Box!

Instead of regarding rabbits as the enemy, give them what they are looking for when they come to your yard: food, water and shelter! Interplant your lawn with clover, give them a water source and leave their nests alone. Rabbits sometimes remain still for up to fifteen minutes – grab your camera!