



## Deterring Rabbits : Possible Strategies

### *learning about rabbits in the landscape*

- Rabbits will generally set up their home in a dense thicket of brush, field edges, thick landscaping, or overgrown junk piles.
- Rabbits usually forage only at dawn and dusk, so you may not see them in your garden.
- They do not hibernate in winter so trees and shrubs need to be protected year-round.
- Rabbits 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. They will also do damage to older trunk tissue of shrubs and woody perennials.
- Rabbit damage can be identified by a clean, angled cut on the end of leaves. On trees and shrubs, rabbits will remove some or all of 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.

### *deterring rabbits*

- 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 can be used in the landscape 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/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 taste/odor protein repellents such as putrescent eggs. Bobbex-R™ should not be used on food crops when fruits, vegetables or herbs are already developed but only up to the flowering stage. It will not wash off but does need to be re-applied to new growth throughout the season.
- Rabbits generally will not bother plants that have: furry or rough textured foliage; milky sap; spiny, succulent, or thick, heavy leaves; and aromatic plants such as herbs. When populations are high, however, rabbits may eat even relatively unpalatable foods.
- Interplanting with selections which have proven rabbit-resistant in your area may protect those plants which are more vulnerable but unfortunately won't deter rabbits completely.

# Rabbit-Resistant Choices from Bowood Farms

The following is a list of plants that are seldom damaged by rabbits.

The plants listed are suggestions only and do not guarantee that the plants will not be bothered by rabbits.

## *annuals/tropicals*

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

## *bulbs/rhizomes/tubers*

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

## *herbs*

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

## *groundcovers*

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

## *trees/shrubs/vines*

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

## *perennials*

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