



DO YOU HAVE A DEER PROBLEM?

The information below will help you address many of the problems caused by deer in Westlake as well as provide you with the options available to you in Westlake 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 Westlake 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, often 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.

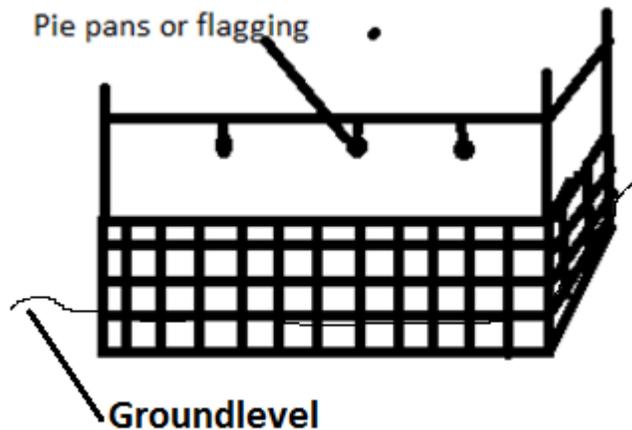


Figure 1



Figure 2 (credit: stumelia.blogspot.com)

See Westlake Codified Ordinance [1211.04 \(b\)](#), which deals with fence height and placement regulations.

Landscape Damage

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. Find a list of several products on the market in the Division of Wildlife publication <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/portals/wildlife/pdfs/publications/wildlife%20management/pub138.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 <http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/portals/wildlife/pdfs/publications/wildlife%20management/pub138.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 1 to January 31 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 1 to April 1. 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 often 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 Police Department at 440.871.3311.

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, often 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 to 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.

Do I Have an Orphaned Fawn?



During the birthing season for deer (April –June) it is not uncommon to find fawns lying in backyards throughout the city. 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.

Options Available to You in WESTLAKE

Option 1: Use the techniques mentioned above to help alleviate the specific problem. Additional information can be found at <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Portals/9/pdf/pub138.pdf> or on the Division of Wildlife website at www.wildohio.com under Species and Habitats→Nuisance Wildlife.

Option 2: If the techniques mentioned above are not working, contact the Division of Wildlife at (330) 644-2293. Often they can identify the reason as to why the technique is not working and can give site-specific advice to further help alleviate the deer problems on your property over the phone.

In the case of an emergency situation, please dial 911.