

MANAGING CRITTERS IN THE GARDEN

RABBITS

Cottontail rabbits. Sturdy 2-foot tall poultry wire fence stretched tight to the ground and preferably buried at least 2 inches.

Jackrabbits. 3-foot tall fence buried at least 6 inches below ground.

JAVELINA

Sturdy 4-foot tall fence of chain link or woven wire with 2 feet poultry wire along the base is adequate.

WOODRATS, also known as PACKRATS

Woodrats can climb as well as dig and may require complete enclosure with poultry wire.

GOPHERS

Create an underground barrier of hardware cloth. This should be at least 2-feet deep.

Exclusion is one strategy used to mitigate pocket gopher damage to young plants, raised beds and small garden plots. Metal fencing material is sometimes buried around the perimeter of small garden spaces.

Galvanized metal hardware cloth ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch) can be buried 18 inches deep around garden fences. Some gophers will dig deeper than this, but it will probably be dependable about 90% of the time. Gophers also travel above ground but are not likely to climb higher than one foot over a fence. Placing hardware cloth underneath constructed raised beds is also very effective as long as the gophers cannot climb over the sides of the bed.

Hexagonal poultry wire is often used to create wire baskets that are installed at planting to protect the roots of young woody plants such as fruit trees. Poultry wire with the smallest openings (1 inch) should be used. There are some caveats with this approach. First remember that gophers

travel above ground and can walk over the fence if it does not extend above ground for a foot or so. Also, roots can easily grow beyond the cage and become vulnerable to gopher feeding. In addition, the wire could stunt the plant due to root girdling as the roots grow in diameter where they go through the wire basket.

DEER

Fencing is the only long-term solution. The fence should be at least 8 feet tall and constructed out of woven wire, high tension wire, UV stabilized vinyl mesh or other strong durable material. Deer can and will jump fences under 8 feet. Small areas can be protected with shorter fences (4 to 6 feet) as deer do not like to jump into small enclosed spaces. Another design utilizes the small area concept by placing two low fences 38 inches apart. The deer feel unable to clear both fences without injury. Woven wire cages can also be built to protect individual plants.

Electric fences can also be used. At least two wires will be needed: one at 18 inches and another at 36 inches above ground. While they could jump over the wires, they prefer to crawl under and will touch the lower wire. If you want to attract them to nuzzle the wire, put a little peanut butter inside some aluminum foil. Once shocked, they are more likely to avoid the feed area. Remember to attach warning signs to alert people to the electric fence. Keep in mind that deer are game species in Arizona and deer management information developed in other states may not be legal in Arizona.

Some people do not care for fences or cannot use them due to local ordinances. If so, contact or area repellents may be worth trying. Contact repellents are applied directly to the plant and repel by taste. Area repellents repel deer by odor alone. The effect is temporary and new growth is not protected and deer become used to the repellent. If deer want something bad enough, they will often find a way. Nylon stockings filled with human hair and bars of soap are not as reliable as products labeled as deer repellents. Dogs may also help prevent deer damage, assuming the dogs are present at night.