



Stop Garden Critters: Fence Tips

Learn more about the fencing options available for your garden to help keep critters out.

(from "Halt, Thief!", by John Morgan)

Fences are available in a variety of materials, and there are several good ones for the garden.

In most circumstances, a garden fence will be a permanent structure that will protect your garden and your crops for years to come, so you'll want to choose one that fits your taste and your wildlife-deterrent needs.

When constructing a fence, it's critical to follow the manufacturer's specifications for posts, spacers, braces, springs, fasteners, clips and staples to ensure a long life for your investment.

Consider some of these fencing options for your garden: Barbed wire or high tensile: These fencing options are commonly used for livestock applications. They can be used as an impediment for deer if you install a tall fence. If you have wild-hog concerns, strand-wire types may be inadequate because they can push through the wires. These choices do not solve small animal invasions, either.

Electric: Fence carrying a voltage can be effective to keep out all types of animals. They can also be set up as permanent or temporary, depending on your needs. A high-tensile fence can be electrified, adding strength to the fence structure. Using multiple wire strands can protect against animals small to large. Polytape is a 1/2-inch-wide plastic strip that contains five interwoven wires. It's more visible than electric wire and is generally used in temporary fence applications.

Keep vegetation away from electric-fence wires, and make sure the fence carries a minimum of 3,000 volts. Energizers can be powered by 12-volt battery, solar cell or household current.

One trick to ensuring your invaders get the hint is to bait your fence with peanut butter. This quickly informs inquisitive critters that this location is worthy of avoidance!

Woven wire: This design can deter a variety of animals. Pay attention to the size of the woven wire if your aim is to keep out small animals, too. You can line the bottom of the woven-wire fence with chicken-wire fence to decrease the size of the openings nearest the ground. To increase fence height, you can add a strand of barbed wire above the woven wire.

If deer populations are high, deer can easily jump a woven-wire fence. Although expensive, weaving two woven-wire fences together (one above the other) on 12-foot posts will create a deer-proof, 8-foot fence.