

Sophia Street Community Garden
Guidelines for Keeping the Deer Out
April 2019

In the spirit of Sophia Garden, the following deer repellent guidelines have been adopted:

Underlying requirement of any method:

- Safe for use with food producing plants
- Follow organic-like practices (no synthetics; chemical free and all natural)
- Respects our community of gardeners and does not encroach on other beds

Fencing

A fence inside your raised bed is the most effective deterrent. This one works both for deer and for our occasional human marauders. A bonus is that the fence also can be used as a trellis for vining plants; be sure to keep the produce inside the fence.

A variety of materials can be used, keeping in mind the toxicity of the materials that are in contact with the soil *and* your food:

- Safe options, depending on the use you have in mind: sustainable timber, bamboo, clay pipes, cardboard, cast iron, steel, concrete vitrified clay, and plastics such as HDPE (high density polyethylene) #5
- Avoid treated lumber
- **No PVC** or other plastics containing phthalates. (This one surprised the Sophia planning team when we were doing our research, especially since there are so many clever gardening ideas using PVC. Here's what we learned... Phthalates are a large group of chemicals that act as binding agents, make plastics flexible and are mainly used to soften PVC. Phthalates have been linked to an alarming number of health issues and diseases. These include breast cancer, ADHD, asthma, obesity, type II diabetes, autism spectrum disorders, reproductive problems and male fertility issues. If you need to be convinced, go to <https://themicrogardener.com/is-pvc-plastic-safe-to-use-in-an-organic-garden/>)

Repellents (If you have a fence, there's no need for repellents or home remedies.)

- **Plantskydd Repellent** is *one of two spray products allowed* at this time. Based on our research, this is the safest and most effective spray and will be provided with your rental. A Plantskydd sprayer will be kept in the shed. To gain access to it, call 231-233-0088 or 231-690-3739, and someone will meet you at the garden. Plantskydd repels by odor, it is OMRI listed organic, and its main ingredient is dried blood. Follow these instructions when using it:
 - When spraying, choose a calm day and do not permit spray to drift onto other beds. Nearby gardeners might not want the product on their plants even though it is safe.
 - The Plantskydd website indicates that it does not rinse off and stays effective for three to four months. Once a plant bears fruit, do not apply onto edible parts of fruit, vegetables & other food crops. Do not spray on salad greens like lettuce and kale as the repellent binds strongly to the plant material and can be difficult to wash off. There is no safety issue, but Plantskydd could affect the taste.

- Spray on dry plants, and allow to dry for 24 hrs. Spray mainly top of plant until wet but not dripping.
 - Ideally, apply in the early morning or late afternoon. Avoid application in direct, hot sunlight.
 - Wash your hands after spraying, and wash fruits and vegetables before eating.
 - Keep out of reach of children and pets.
- Note: If gardeners want to purchase their own repellent alternative, **Outta Here** is the *only other product* that meets our community garden standards. Outta Here repels by odor, is PCO certified organic, and its main ingredient is mint oil. Follow these instructions when using it:
 - When spraying, choose a calm day and do not permit spray to drift onto other beds. Nearby gardeners might not want the product on their plants even though it is safe.
 - Carefully follow directions on the label.
 - **Green Screen** bags have been used since the garden began. Green Screen bags are safe for edible plants and are organic, but their effectiveness is questionable. The Sophia deer seem to have acclimated to them.
 - **Home remedies** must be chemical free, all natural and have no synthetic ingredients. Application should be placed on the soil and leaves. If spraying, choose a calm day and do not permit drift onto other beds.
 - **Perimeter repellent** will be applied to the ground around the garden to habituate the deer to avoiding the garden area in the spring before planting has begun.

Unsafe Repellents – Absolutely Forbidden at Sophia

Research identified the following list of products **unsafe for edible and food producing plants**:

Bobbex	Everguard
Deer B Gone	Liquid Fence
Deer Off	Miller Hot Sauce
Deer Stopper	Shot Gun

The following repellents are considered safe and meet organic practice guidelines; however, out of respect for our community setting, these are not allowed at Sophia because they *contain putrescent eggs, a common allergen*.

Deer Out	Nature’s Mace
Natural Armor	I Must Garden

In summary: There are two spray products only that are acceptable at Sophia. Plantskydd is the preferred repellent and will be provided with your rental. Outta Here is an acceptable alternative. **Fencing is the best of all options, and it can be structurally simple and inexpensive.**

Questions about these guidelines? Contact Sharron Lemmer, 231.887.7000, sharronlemmer@gmail.com