

Living with White-Tailed Deer

A Homeowner's Guide





Everyone has a role in managing wildlife

Manitoba Conservation delivers a variety of programs and services to help maintain sustainable populations of wildlife in Manitoba. The department also recognizes the need to minimize the risk wildlife might pose to people and property.

Urban wildlife management presents many opportunities and challenges. These issues can only be addressed through the combined efforts and support of government and members of the community. Working together, we can reduce wildlife problems and continue to enjoy the presence of deer in the city of Winnipeg.

Stan Struthers
Minister
Manitoba Conservation



Winnipeg is a city blessed with plenty of green space and a pristine landscape. With this environment comes the challenge of living alongside natural wildlife. This brochure is a great resource to provide us with the education to co-exist with our deer population and minimize the negative effects on our environment, while enjoying all the natural beauty our city has to offer.

Mayor Sam Katz

Living with Deer

Cities and towns have many natural areas that support white-tailed deer. Urban deer populations benefit from abundant food and shelter. They have few natural predators and bylaws prohibit hunting them within city limits. As a result, urban deer populations have tremendous growth potential.

Deer sometimes damage gardens, shrubs, fruit trees and other public or private property. They can be a threat to human health and safety when they wander onto roadways and collide with vehicles. They can also carry deer ticks, which may transmit Lyme disease to humans.

The challenge is to find an acceptable balance between the number of deer in the city and the associated risk to people and their property.





What You Can Do

To minimize or reduce the damage caused by deer to your property, you may want to consider using one or more of the following techniques:

Do Not Feed the Deer

It is extremely important that people do not feed deer. Deer can find natural food sources and survive well on their own. In fact, handouts from humans may do the deer more harm than good:

- Feeding deer, especially during winter, maintains artificially high populations that make deer more susceptible to starvation and disease.
- Deer become accustomed to food handouts and lose their fear of humans, putting both deer and people at greater risk.
- Feeding deer attracts more of them to an area resulting in more damage to nearby properties.
- Feeding encourages deer to travel, increasing risks when they cross streets.

Natural Resource Officers have authority under *The Manitoba Wildlife Act* to order people to stop feeding deer if it creates a risk of property damage or a risk to health and safety for wildlife or people.

Fencing

Fencing yards, vegetable gardens and flowerbeds, or wrapping individual plants and shrubs, are the best methods to prevent deer damage. There are many effective fencing materials including snow fencing, plastic bird netting, burlap or wire mesh (chicken wire) and permanent woven-wire or wood fencing with gates that can provide protection from deer.

Repellents

Repellents help prevent deer from feeding on vegetables, flowers, ornamental shrubs and trees. The effectiveness of commercial or homemade repellents depends on the number of deer, their feeding habits and weather conditions. Many commercial repellents are available at greenhouses, tree nurseries and pest control businesses. Property owners should still expect some damage, even when repellents are used.

Deer-smart Landscaping and Gardening

Deer are selective feeders that prefer some plants to others. Other than cedars, plants native to Manitoba are generally deer resistant or tolerant. To minimize damage to vegetable gardens, ornamental plants, shrubs and trees, try gardening with plants that deer usually avoid. Some of these include:

- vegetables – cucumber, onion, hot pepper, sweet pepper, tomato
- annuals – amaranth, dusty miller, marigold, snapdragon, zinnia
- perennials – bleeding-heart, chrysanthemum, foxglove, ornamental grasses, lily-of-the-valley, sage, native prairie plants
- woody plants – Colorado blue spruce, common lilac, dogwoods, junipers, pines, paper birch, Russian olive



Deer and Vehicles

There are currently over 6,000 known deer-vehicle collisions in Manitoba each year, including over 300 on Winnipeg roads. These collisions are the major cause of deer mortality in Winnipeg. Vehicle damage can be costly and injury to occupants is possible. Wildlife collisions can even cause severe traffic accidents involving more than one vehicle. The frequency of deer-vehicle collisions relates directly to the size of the city's deer population.





Tips: Most collisions occur between dusk and dawn. Deer also become more active during their breeding season in October through late November. To avoid collisions, drive with caution, especially in the evening and early morning. Slow down in known deer crossing areas and scan for deer that may be feeding beside the road, or attempting to cross. If a deer crosses the road, slow down, dim your headlights and blow your horn to scare it off the road. If you see one deer, chances are others are nearby. Avoid swerving to prevent loss of control and collision with traffic, and brake hard only if traffic isn't following close. You can also alert other drivers of a deer crossing by flashing your hazard lights.

Additional Information

Visit our web site at

www.manitoba.ca/whitetaileddeer.html

for more information on fencing, commercial and homemade deer repellents, deer-smart landscaping, and scaring devices.

In cooperation with Manitoba Public Insurance



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