

Support British deer with BDS

The British Deer Society (BDS) invites you to join our mission, guided by our commitment to ethics/welfare, science/research, and education/training. Together, we strive to ensure the well-being and fair treatment of British deer.

Who we are:

As a community of deer enthusiasts, the BDS is united in our mission to safeguard the welfare of deer, influencing policies and practices with decades of expertise and modern advancements in science and technology.

What we do:

Through research, education, and advocacy, we address critical issues like deer welfare, environmental impact, and sustainable deer management.

Why support us:

Support the BDS to ensure a UK where deer thrive in harmony with their environment. Your contribution will fund research that improves our understanding of deer in a changing world, provide education so more people can appreciate these amazing creatures, and support welfare initiatives to keep them thriving.

How to support us:

Membership: Join our community and add your voice, speaking up for deer and staying informed with our quarterly magazine as well as regular news and updates from the Society, and connecting with fellow deer enthusiasts in your area.

Donations: Every donation gift makes a significant impact on our efforts to speak up for deer.

Spread the word: Follow us on social media @BritishDeerSociety and be an advocate for deer welfare and responsible deer management.

Join the BDS in preserving British deer and their habitats. Embrace our commitment – where passion meets purpose, and wildlife flourishes.



Photo: Marc Baldwin

Discover Britain's diverse deer

Six deer species freely roam the British countryside, thriving in diverse habitats. Native and introduced, these adaptable creatures contribute significantly to Britain's biodiversity, embodying the essence of our captivating natural heritage.



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Visit www.bds.org.uk or scan the code to learn more about deer in gardens.



the british deer society Together for Deer

www.bds.org.uk

Deer in gardens SHARING SPACE WITH NATURE



Living with deer in your garden



Plant suggestions for deer-resistant gardens



Avid gardeners find great pleasure in creating their own carefully tended displays and sanctuaries. However, burgeoning deer populations and shrinking natural habitats often turn our gardens into irresistible havens for these beautiful creatures.

Which deer might you encounter?

In Britain, six species of deer inhabit the wild, with roe deer, fallow deer, and muntjac commonly visiting gardens. While deer are typically active at dawn and dusk, daytime visits are increasingly common as they explore residential areas.

The challenge of deer in your garden

Once inside, deer can quickly become unwelcome for feeding on prized plants, especially delicate or young foliage. Their need to shed velvet from newly-grown antlers can result in damage to stems and branches. During the breeding season, they may inadvertently harm plants while demonstrating their strength and dominance.

Recognising deer damage

Deer leave distinct signs of their presence, such as frayed and tattered cuts on plants, shrubs, and trees. Their slightly ragged bite marks, lacking upper incisor teeth, distinguish them from other garden visitors like rabbits.



Photo: Terry Richards Photography

Achieving garden harmony

While having deer visit your garden may seem daunting, it also offers an opportunity to admire these remarkable creatures. However, if you prefer to deter them, consider strategies such as fencing, deterrents, and plant protection.

Fencing: Specialised fencing can be effective but may require planning permission and regular maintenance. Select materials carefully to prevent entanglements.

Deterrents: Various products, from sprays to sonic devices, offer potential solutions. Traditional methods like lion dung and human hair may also prove effective.

Protection: Shield young plants and trees with protective tubes, removing them as plants grow and can withstand browsing.

Minimum specifications for deer fences

SPECIES	MESH SIZE (mm)	HEIGHT (m)
Muntjac deer	75 x 75	1.5
Water deer	75 x 75	1.5
Roe deer	200 x 150	1.8
Fallow deer	220 x 200	1.8
Sika deer	220 x 200	1.8
Red deer	220 x 200	1.9

Coexisting with deer

Encouraging deer to feast on alternative plants can minimise damage to favourites. Incorporating plants that may be less palatable to deer and maintaining a diverse garden benefits wildlife and reduces the need for chemical controls, fostering a healthy ecosystem.

Embracing nature's guests

It can be difficult to exclude deer entirely and learning to coexist brings rewards. Observing these creatures offers insights into their behaviour, enriching your gardening experience.

While no plant can be entirely safe, certain types and groupings of plants are less susceptible to damage. Consider incorporating the following:

Prairie style/ornamental grasses: Mass plantings of robust grasses like *Stipa*, *Carex*, *Panicum*, and *Miscanthus*, interspersed with *Kniphofia* and *Verbena bonariensis*.

Damp/woodland plants: Ferns like *Polystichium* and *Dryopteris*, ground-cover plants like *Cotoneaster* and *Pachysandra*, *Hydrangeas* for mid-level interest, and crown-lifted ornamental specimen trees like *Amelanchier* and *Prunus*.

Mediterranean/drought-tolerant schemes: Structural plants like *Yucca*, *Phormium*, and *Cordyline*, paired with aromatic herbs such as *Rosemary*, *Lavender*, *Santolina*, and *Nepeta*.

These plantings can create beautiful, resilient gardens that maybe less attractive to deer while enhancing your outdoor space.

With thanks to garden designer Alice Meacham for her advice on plant selection.