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PROTECT YOUR LANDSCAPE FROM WILDLIFE VISITORS
by Melinda Myers, Gardening expert, Author and TV & Radio Host

April 8, 2011 – Spring means planting and a new buffet for the hungry wildlife that frequent your landscape. Protect your investment with a little preventative and ongoing care.

Tulips, crocus, and a few other tasty spring flowering bulbs will keep deer, rabbits and other wildlife satisfied until your new plantings are installed. Consider using animal resistant bulbs like daffodils, hyacinths, and Fritillaria in the future. In the meantime, protect these and other spring beauties from hungry four-legged visitors.

Keep in mind animal feeding patterns and food preferences change from year to year. So the plants and gardens left untouched last year may move to the top of the menu this season. A few of the perennial plants deer generally leave alone include hellebore, lamb's ear, bleeding heart, lungwort, Oriental poppy, allium, coral bells, and yarrow. Zinnia, ageratum, wax begonia, snapdragon, cleome, dusty miller, and sweet alyssum are a few annuals to consider. But keep in mind, if the animal populations are high, hungry animals will eat just about anything.

Fencing is the most effective, though not most attractive means of protection. A 5 or 6 foot tall fence around small areas will keep out the deer. Make it tight to the ground and you will also keep out the rabbits. Just make sure small animals can't squeeze in through the gate.

Scare tactics like motion sensitive sprinklers will surprise passing wildlife with a blast of water and may help discourage feeding. Just be sure to turn off the sprinkler when working in the garden or you'll be the one that ends up wet.

Repellents use smell or taste to discourage animals from munching on your landscape plants. Try using an organic long-lasting repellent, like [Bobbex](#), that's safe for children, pets, and the environment. Independent studies by the Department of Forestry and Horticulture at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station showed fencing was the only thing more effective than this product. Increase success by applying these before or as soon as possible after the animals start feeding. It is easier to prevent feeding than break a bad habit. And as always read and follow label directions.

Keep monitoring animal activity and feeding throughout the season. Adjust your strategy to match any changes in animal feeding patterns. With persistence and planning you too can have a beautiful landscape.

If you'd like to schedule an interview with Melinda Myers to discuss this or other gardening topics, please contact Diana Paul at 414-771-1888 or dianapaul@wi.rr.com

Gardening expert, TV host and author Melinda Myers has 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including **Can't Miss Small Space Gardening**. She hosts the nationally syndicated **Melinda's Garden Moment** segments which air on TV and radio stations throughout the U.S. She is a columnist and contributing editor for **Birds & Blooms** magazine, hosted "**The Plant Doctor**" radio program for over 20 years as well as **Great Lakes Gardener** on PBS. Melinda has a master's degree in horticulture, is a certified arborist and was a horticulture instructor with tenure. Myers' web site is www.melindamyers.com

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