

Treeways

2023 - 3

Oh Deer?

Deer do what deer do; deer eat what deer eat; and deer really like living in Sunfish Lake. Our City landscape of widely spaced homes, wide and open yards, woodland edges, forest, marsh, and lakes approaches ideal habitat for deer. Deer have a good life here, as long as they do not meet up with one of our residents driving a car on our streets or neighboring highways.

Deer especially like the buffets we set out for them in our personal landscapes. Eating the roses and lilies right at flowering. Pulling down crabapple branches to eat the fruit and twigs. Emptying bird feeders and drinking out of bird baths. When we plant arborvitaes, we need to cage them or the antlered rodents may “poodle” them within days of planting. Young trees’ trunks must be protected from antler rubbing each fall/winter. All these issues are magnified when we have a drought or a snowier than average winter limiting the number of deer food choices.

Here is the City Forester’s perspective. Deer were here first and they share their habitat with us. Therefore, if we want our personal landscape to look the way we planned and installed it then we need to **create reasons for deer to not eat or otherwise damage our plantings**. There are many deer repellent products. All deer repellent products work some of the time, however none of the repellents work all the time so follow directions closely. Fencing is effective where possible and acceptable. A larger size dog roaming within an electronic fenced area works well but a small dog tends to be ignored by deer and could become fast food for coyotes.

Tree trunk protection tubes work well to prevent deer antler rubbing and should be installed by about State Fair time each fall and then can be removed about the end of May. Yelling at deer may or may not be effective – personal experience. Finally, please know that even when you plant flowers, shrubs and trees listed as deer resistant or deer repellent when deer are very hungry in the dead of winter a hungry deer will even eat buckthorn and spruce trees.

Your City Forester is available for a free consultation by phone, text, email or in-person discussion of all things trees, environment or landscape within the City of Sunfish Lake (612-803-9033 or Jim@LStrees.com).