

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Hippity hoppity, Easter's on its way



Photo Cynthia Brian

For a burst of bright color and wildlife resistance, the spring flowering freesia is fantastic.

By Cynthia Brian

"It was Easter Sunday. The full-blossomed trees filled all the air with fragrance and with joy." ~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Spanish Student

Blossoming fruit trees, poppies adorning hillsides, and daffodils illuminating walking paths ... the sirens of the start of spring have sprung. As seedlings pop through the soft soil and new green growth emerges on hedges, trees and vines, uninvited wildlife visitors tend to hop, fly, scamper, and trot into our landscapes.

Here comes Peter Cottontail, hopping down the bunny trail, followed by the families of Bambi, Tom Turkey, and Squiggly Squirrel. A buffet feast awaits their arrival in our rose beds, perennial gardens, and

vegetable patches.

What is a human to do to protect our precious landscapes from invaders?

Although repellents promise perimeter patrolling, I have not found any that completely protect my premises. As much as I admire these furry, feathered and fluffy "friends," I don't want them munching my flowers, foliage, sprouts and shrubs. How can we find a way for the realms of nature to co-exist?

Here are few suggestions:

1. Fencing is the most effective deterrent for deer and rabbits. Although the bunnies can't jump over a 6-foot fence, to keep deer out of our gardens, we need to erect 9-foot enclosures. Sadly, squirrels scurry from trees to fence rails. Turkeys fly over fences.
2. Drive around your neighborhood to see what kinds of plants are thriving. Consider using what grows well in your area.
3. During dry months, some sprays may be effective, including Liquid Fence which, according to the company, is natural, biodegradable, non-toxic, and safe for the environment with rotten eggs being the main ingredient. Supposedly wildlife can smell the stink up to two weeks after humans can no longer smell the stench.
4. Sprinkle blood meal on flowers and foliage. The problem I have experienced with this method, however, is that it attracts raccoons and skunks! Not a winning suggestion.
5. Unless you have fencing and/or containment, avoid using plants that are known to be delicacies such as roses, fruit, and leafy greens. If you plant tasty treats, the hungry nomads will find them.
6. Before buying large quantities of a plant, test the nibbling desire by buying a small container and placing it for two weeks in an area where the wildlife wander. Watch and wait.
7. Buy more mature plants in larger containers. Plants that have abundant leaves can tolerate the nipping and gnawing better than smaller specimens. Taller plants are less susceptible to damage when lower leaves are eaten. They recover more swiftly.
8. Don't over water. The lusher the specimen, the more attractive it is for dinner. Drought-resistant vegetation is less likely to be gobbled.
9. Place pungent plants bordering areas that may be enticing. Mints, lantana, alyssum, marigolds, geraniums, catnip, strawflower, salvia, and scented geraniums may deter the diners.

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