



A weekly question/answer column

How Do I Keep Stray Animals Out Of My Yard?

Clell Bagley answers:*

If you feel like your yard has become a kennel for stray animals this summer, you are not alone. Animals tend to visit other yards more often in the summer. Consider one or more of these methods to get rid of strays. Also keep in mind that safety for both humans and the animals should be considered and that not all methods are effective for all animals.

- If you are building a fence, consider what animals you want to exclude as you select fencing materials. If you already have a fence and want to deter cats from climbing it, place strips of double faced tape or plastic along the top. They do not like the feel of these materials on their paws.
- Water propelled from a cup, pitcher, hose or toy water gun can dissuade animals from visiting. Even if the water doesn't make contact, the motions involved and the water landing nearby will send the message that animals are not welcome. This method, however, can be time consuming and requires that someone regularly monitors your yard.
- Moth balls can be an effective area repellent. Homemade repellent recipes can work as well. Try chopping one whole Spanish onion and one jalapeno pepper. Add 2 quarts water to 1 tablespoon of cayenne pepper and boil for 20 minutes. Cool, strain water through a cheesecloth, then spray with a garden sprayer in areas where animals are being a nuisance. You may need to spray for up to 2 weeks.
- Repellent devices usually involve a triggering mechanism so that sound and lights are activated when a barrier is broken by the animal's entry or movement. With this method, it is important to consider the effects on the animal as well as neighbors within audio range.
- If all else fails while trying to get Fido to leave your yard, help is available through your local animal control agency. They also assist with wild animal control.

* Clell Bagley is Utah State University Extension Veterinarian