

UNL Extension: Acreage Insights

Acreage eNews-May 2013

<http://acreage.unl.edu>

Plan Now to Protect Your Garden from Wildlife

By [Stephen Vantassel](#), UNL Extension Project Coordinator of Wildlife Damage Management



With the arrival of warmer weather, you are probably thinking about getting the garden planted. But along with all your preparation, be sure to include strategies to prevent wildlife damage too. The reason is a little prevention goes a long way. Too often gardeners neglect prevention only to discover that the animals have enjoyed the crop before they could. What follows are a few simple tips to ensure you actually enjoy your harvest.

1. Isolate your garden. Place gardens in locations away from cover, including tall grass and wooded areas. Wild animals are always worried about being seen by predators. Forcing them to cross an open area to reach your garden makes them less likely to approach.
2. Fences are your friends. A simple 18-inch chicken-wire fence will keep rabbits at bay. Install taller fences (up to 3 feet or more) with an 18-inch over-hang to prevent woodchucks from gaining access. If animals are likely to burrow underneath, secure 12 inches of mesh to the ground around the perimeter. The addition of a strand of electric wire greatly improves the effectiveness of the fence. The [NebGuide Managing Deer Damage in Nebraska](#) has a lot of information on electric fences .
3. Monitor for voles. Voles, sometimes called meadow mice, are mouse-sized rodents that can inflict tremendous damage to your plants at and below the surface level. Signs of vole presence include dime to quarter-sized holes in the soil and inch-wide trails in the grass. If voles are present, follow the suggestions in NebGuide [Controlling Vole Damage](#).
4. Be vigilant. Wildlife can inflict severe damage to gardens in a short amount of time. It is essential to identify the signs of damage quickly, particularly as harvest season approaches. Tips on identification of wildlife damage can be found at [The Internet Center](#)

[for Wildlife Damage Management.](#)

5. Know where to find help. [The Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management](#) has a wealth of information on controlling wildlife damage, as do the [UNL Extension Wildlife Damage NebGuides](#). If you still need assistance, feel free to contact me.

[Please take our survey.](#)