Deer are common in northeastern Ohio. They stroll across the landscaped grounds here at Advanstar Communications on a regular basis. They are a beautiful sight, but each winter and early spring they eat and damage many of the ornamentals that beautify our corporate headquarters. In fact, our Grounds Manager Tom Sprague no longer plants spring bulbs. Once the tulips break ground and prepare to blossom, the deer nip them off.

They damage evergreens too. This past winter we covered many of the smaller evergreens with burlap. This seemed to work. But burlap isn’t such a pretty sight.

In an adjacent Cleveland suburb about 140 people crowded into a city hall. They wanted something done about the hungry deer eating their landscape plants. One man, the owner of a 16-acre horticultural park, said he put up a 7-foot-high fence to keep them out. They just jumped over it, he said.

A wildlife official told the group that there are over 8,000 deer in Cuyahoga County. Most live in and around our scenic Metro Park system. He suggested a bow hunting season to reduce the deer population.

Judging from comments we often receive here at LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, deer are a big problem for landscape plants just about everywhere in the United States.

Occasionally we get product releases claiming successes for deer repellents—products made from lion dung and coyote urine. Mesh netting. Electric fences. Ultrasonic devices that scare deer away.

Tell us about your experiences. If you’ve had success keeping deer from damaging your, or clients’, landscapes our readers really want to hear from you.

Until we do, consider this list of plants rarely or seldom severely damaged by deer: Barberry, Redosier Dogwood, Forsythia, Honeylocust, Beautybush, Norway Spruce, White Spruce, Colorado Spruce, Mugo Pine, Austrian Pine, Scotch Pine, and Common Lilac. The list was compiled several years ago by horticulturists and wildlife specialists at Cornell University.