

THE POTENTIAL OF TEXTURE AS A DEER DETERRENT: THE SLIME EFFECT

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Abstract: We examined the potential of altering the surface texture of plant material as a potential deterrent to consumption by white-tailed deer. Two u-shaped garden plots were divided into 16, uniform plots (2.2m x 4.3m) each containing approximately 50 chrysanthemums (*C. morifolium*). The plots were randomly assigned to one of the treatments or as a control. Immediately after planting, ten plants were randomly selected and marked within each plot. Plants were misted and treatments applied by hand broadcast. Treatments consisted of methyl cellulose (38.2g) and two-levels of a proprietary polymer (9.1g and 45.5g). Upon contact with water, methylcellulose became a viscous slime while the proprietary polymer was similar to gelatin. Each substance was visible on the plants throughout the study. Bite marks were counted on the ten marked plants within each plot, on 4 occasions at 3-day intervals. None of the treatments were effective in deterring deer from consuming plant material. Differences were noted among plot locations, suggesting deer entered the garden predominantly from a single general direction and consumed forages most readily available.

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