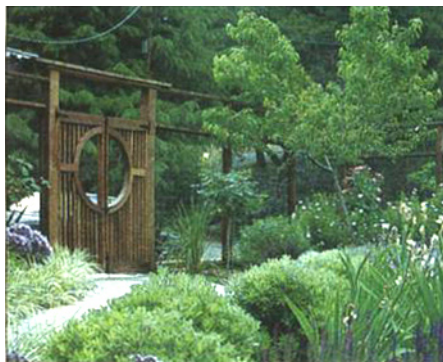


Oh Deer!

by Mia Amato



How to keep deer out of a garden? A six-foot fence is the best defense. But some people find fencing ugly, a blot on the rustic landscape that attracted them to live in deer country in the first place.

Look closely at the picture (top) and you can just about see the “invisible” fence created by Oakland landscape contractor Chris E. Hecht.

“The fence is six feet high, in some places eight feet,” said Hecht, who

was awarded by the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA) for this deer-proof design. “We used rough redwood framing, and the infill is welded wire, stretched very tightly and spray painted black.”

The dark wire is barely visible inside the garden, which is small but commands a hilltop view. While Hecht often suggests flowering vines in fencing as a cover-up, “The owner didn’t want vine cover because it would make the garden feel to enclosed,” he said. “The idea was to have a colorful, protected garden that incorporates the view and surrounding wildscape.”

Hecht also did the redwood moon gate which marks the front entrance, and patchwork stone path through the courtyard garden. The planting design by Lura De

Ome features bright Mediterranean perennials for this gravelly, sunny site: lavenders, yarrows, bearded iris and salvias. Instead of lawn, a meadow patch of low-growing chamomile emits herbal scent when walked on.

“We used some plants considered deer-proof, such as cistus, ceanothus, buddleia, and Mexican sage,” De Ome said. “Those plants are on both the inside and outside of the fence, which also helps to make the garden seem larger and the fence disappear.”