

WILDLIFE FRIENDLY FENCING

*(How to fence your property
without harming animals)*

A guide from



Westchester Land Trust

Fences can help keep kids, pets, or livestock safe, mark property lines, add privacy, or enhance your landscape. But some types of fencing can unintentionally harm wildlife or block animals from safely moving between habitats.

But with a few simple choices, you can build fences that work for you and for nature.

WHY ARE FENCES A PROBLEM?

Animals need to move—to find food, mates, shelter, and nesting sites. In already developed areas like southern New York, fences can block wildlife pathways, push animals toward roads, and increase the risk of injury, disease, and overcrowding.

Some fencing materials can even trap or harm animals like snakes, turtles, and birds.

TIPS FOR BETTER FENCING

MATERIALS MATTER

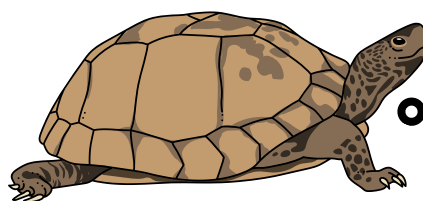
- Chain link or coated metal fences are okay if you add wildlife passage points.
- Deer fencing works best in small areas (like veggie gardens). Use it only where truly needed—it blocks all animals.
- Avoid picket fences with sharp points or narrow gaps where animals can get stuck.
- Skip barbed wire—it's outdated and dangerous to wildlife.

ADD WILDLIFE ACCESS

- Leave a small gap (at least 8 inches) at the bottom so turtles and small mammals can pass through.
- Or cut out a few low openings in chain link fences.
- In wooded areas, lean a log against the fence to create a bridge for small critters.

MAINTAIN THE FENCE

- Cap any hollow fence posts (birds and animals can fall in and get trapped).
- Remove old or unused fencing to prevent injuries.



WHY IT MATTERS
Healthy ecosystems need
roaming wildlife! Box turtles eat
mayapple fruit and distribute
the seeds—it's the only way
mayapples reproduce.