

Deer Resistant Plants

Most gardeners will agree that these lovely creatures aren't so lovely when they wander through the garden eating our favourite plants. They can do considerable damage to gardens and there are various ways to discourage or repel them. One way is to grow plants that deer find unpalatable. However these furry friends enjoy a little variety in their menu; one year they may not like some of the plants we have suggested, but may feast on them the next year! They also change their eating habits when other food sources are scarce. In our area deer population can be high, causing them to browse on plants they might normally avoid. Keeping the above in mind, here is a list of plants that deer will almost never eat.

Note: The plants with a check ✓ are deer resistant once mature, but must be protected while young (see tip #2). Plants marked with an asterisk * are best bets.

PERENNIALS

Achillea
Acanthus (Bear's Breeches)
Aconitum (Monkshood)
Anemone hybrida (Japanese Anemone)
**Anthemis* (Yellow Fern Leaf Daisy)
**Arabis*
**Artemisia*
Aster alpinus (Dwarf Aster)
**Aubretia*
Brunnera
Centaurea montana (Perennial Bachelor's Button)
**Cerastium* (Snow-in-Summer)
**Chrysanthemum superbum* (Shasta Daisy)
Coreopsis (Tick Seed)
Crocsmia
Cynarea (Artichoke)
Dianthus deltoides (Maiden Pink)
Dicentra (Bleeding Heart)

**Digitalis* (Foxglove)
**Euphorbia*
Epimedium
Eschscholzia californica (Calif. Poppy)
**Ferns*
**Grasses*
Gaillardia (Blanket Flower)
Gunnera
Helleborus (Hellebore)
**Iberis* (Candytuft)
**Iris*
Kniphofia (Red Hot Poker)
**Lavendula* (Lavender)
**Linaria purpurea* Canon J. Went (pink form)
Lupinus (Lupine)
**Lychnis coronaria* (Rose Campion)
Liriope (Lily Turf)
Oxalis
**Ophiopogon planiscapus* (Mondo Grass)

Papaver (Poppies)
Salvia (Perennial types only)
**Santolina* (Lavender Cotton)
**Saponaria ocymoides* (Soap Wort)
**Senecio*
**Sisyrinchium* (Blue-eyed Grass)
**Stachys byzantina* (Lambs Ears)
Verbascum (mullein) woolly leaf types
Zantedeschia (Calla)

TIP #1

Commercial repellents can work if sprayed often enough to keep new growth covered and to replace what rain and watering wash away. Do not apply repellents to edible portions of plants unless approved on the label; some are not safe to eat.

VINES & GROUNDCOVERS

TIP #2

While there are many plants that are "Deer candy" such as roses, pansies and hosta, protective netting can be used in the spring when growth is tender, and then again briefly in the fall when deer are trying to put on extra pounds for the winter. This will substantially widen the range of suitable plants for deer country.

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Kinnickinik)
✓ *Clematis* (all types)
**Cymbalaria muralis* (Kennilworth Ivy)
**Erica* (Heather)
Euonymus spp
**Fragaria chiloensis* (Wild Beach Strawberry)
**Galium odoratum* (Sweet Woodruff)
**Gaultheria procumbens* (Wintergreen)
**Genista pilosa* 'Vancouver Gold'
Hypericum (St. John's Wort)
Jasminum polyanthum (Jasmine)
Jasminum officinale (Jasmine)
**Juniperus* (Juniper)
**Lamium maculatum*
**Mentha pulegium* (Pennyroyal)
**Satureja douglasii* (Yerba buena)
**Thymus* (Thyme)
Trachelospermum (Star Jasmine)



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TREES AND SHRUBS

**Abies* (fir)
Acer circinatum (Vine Maple)
Albizia julibrissin (Mimosa Tree)
✓ *Arbutus menziesii* (Pacific Madrone)
✓ *Arbutus unedo* (Strawberry Tree)
Berberis (Barberry)
**Buxus* (Boxwood)
**Calluna vulgaris* (Scotch Heather)
**Cedrus* (Cedar)
**Choisya ternata* (Mexican Mock Orange)
**Cistus* (Rock Rose)
Ceanothus spp. (California Lilac)
**Cotoneaster*
**Cryptomeria*
Daphne
Escallonia
**Eucalyptus*
Hamamelis (Witch Hazel)
**Ilex* (Holly)
**Juniperus*
Kerria japonica
**Kolkwitzia* (Beauty Bush)
**Lithodora*
Magnolia grandiflora (evrgm. Magnolia)
**Mahonia* (Oregon Grape)
Yucca
✓ *Nandina* spp. (Heavenly Bamboo)
Osmanthus
**Phormium* (New Zealand Flax)
**Picea* (Spruce)
**Pinus* (Pine)
**Potentilla*
**Rhododendrons*
Rhus typhina (Staghorn Sumac)
Skimmia
Taxus (Yew)
**Trachycarpus* (Windmill Palm)

BULBS

Agapanthus (Lily-of-the-Nile)
Freesia
Galanthus (Snowdrop)
Iris danfordiae
Iris douglasiana
Iris (German & Siberian)
Iris reticulata
Leucojum (Glory of the Snow)
Narcissus (Daffodil)
Ornithogalum can be invasive
Scilla (Bluebell)
Tuberous Begonia



TIP #3

Some gardeners repel deer by hanging small cloth bags filled with blood meal among the plants the deer seem to be attracted to; disadvantages are that blood meal attracts dogs and smells unpleasant when wet.

ANNUALS

**Ageratum* (Floss Flower)
Begonia, (Tuberous)
**Calendula* (Pot Marigold)
Catharanthus (Madagascar Periwinkle)
Clarkia amoena (Godetia)
**Impatiens*
**Mimulus* (Monkey Flower)
**Myosotis* (Forget-me-not)
**Papaver rhoeas* (Shirley Poppy)
Verbena
**Zinnia*

TIP #4

Strongly-scented kitchen herbs are often overlooked by browsing deer, because their tastes are too strong (and therefore offensive) to their sensitive tongues, with the exception of *Ocimum basilicum* (Basil)

HERBS

**Lavandula* spp. (Lavender)
**Mentha* (Mint)
**Mentha pulegium* (Pennyroyal)
**Nepeta cataria* (Catnip)
**Origanum vulgare* (Oregano)
**Origanum majorana* (Marjoram)
**Rosemarinus officinalis* (Rosemary)
**Ruta graveolens* (Rue)
**Salvia officinalis* (Sage)
**Santolina*
**Thymus* (Thyme)