

# DEER RESISTANT GARDENING

Deer are often the cause of destruction to a home's garden, trees, and ornamental shrubs. This damage has become more prevalent due to increasing deer population, real estate development and human population shifting from cities to suburban living. Their only predator seems to be the automobile!

Sure, deer are beautiful to look at. They are graceful and elegant animals... especially in your neighbor's yard. The deer are not ruining your landscape with malice. They are just trying to survive. One adult deer eats between 6-10 pounds of vegetation a day.

Can you completely solve the problem? Well, not entirely. No plant is "deer proof." There are many strategies that successfully control the damage deer cause. Since other critters can also cause damage, the first thing you will need to do is assess the crime scene to determine the perpetrators. Deer tracks, which are about 3" in length, are a good clue. If your grass has a tamped-down, swirled section, Bambi was probably there. Finally, the type of damage done can tell you whether deer are to blame. Because deer have no upper incisors, they will tear their food away and leave torn leaves and jagged stems. Rabbits will give you a nice, clean cut-how considerate!

So now what do you do? It is actually quite simple. First get rid of the plants they especially like (tulips, hosta and daylilies seem to be like candy to them) and replace them with plants they find unpalatable. If there is nothing good to eat, they will move on. That being said, deer tastes are much like humans. It varies by area, time of year, species, and even the individual deer. In other words, some people like cauliflower, some do not.

Deer seem to avoid certain textures in plants, so consider fuzzy leaves, rough or tough leaves, or leaves with a strong aroma.

Any tender, succulent plant may attract deer, especially early in the season, when green vegetation in their natural habitat is not available. Although no plant is guaranteed to resist deer browsing, the following should (?) be left alone.

**Annuals.** Ageratum, Begonia, Celosia, Cleome, Cosmos, Dahlia, Dusty Miller, Geranium, Heliotrope, Lantana, Lobelia, Marigolds, Nasturtium, Ornamental Peppers, Periwinkle, Petunia, Salvia, Snapdragons, Strawflower, Verbena, Zinnias

**Perennials.** Achillea, Aconitum, Aegopodium, Ajuga, Artemisia, Asarum, Baptisia, Bergenia, Brunnera, Cimicifuga, Convallaria, Coreopsis, Corydalis, Dicentra, Digitalis, Echinops, Epimedium, Ferns, Gaillardia, Gallium, Geranium, Helleborus, Heuchera, Iberis, Iris, Lamium, Lavandula, Liatris, Ligularia, Monarda, Myosotis, Nepeta, Ornamental Grasses, Pachysandra, Paeonia, Perovskia, Potentilla, Pulmonaria, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Stachys, Verbascum

**Bulbs.** Allium, Crocus, Daffodil, Fritillaria, Grape Hyacinth, Scilla

**Herbs.** Most are due to their strong aroma and flavor

**Shrubs.** Barberry, Boxwood, Caryopteris, Clethera, Cotoneaster, Crape Myrtle, Daphne, Dogwood, Forsythia, Fothergilla, Holly, Juniper, Kerria, Lilac, Mahonia, Mugo Pine, Pieris, Potentilla, Privet, Spirea, Viburnum, Weigela

**Trees.** Ash, Beech, Birch, Cedar, Dogwood, Ginkgo, Hawthorn, Hard Maple, Katsura, Locust, Mimosa, Pines, Smoke Tree, Sourwood, Spruce, Sweet Gum, Sycamore, Tulip Tree

Trees and shrubs are susceptible to damage in harsh winters. If there is snow cover, deer can and will strip the bark off many trees and shrubs. Wrap the trunks of trees and cover shrubs with burlap, if necessary. Also, experiment with some of the many repellent sprays available.

We would like to update this list. Let us know what works and what does not! Good luck!



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