

DEER RESISTANT PERENNIALS

Nothing is more fulfilling than planting a beautiful garden. Gardening can be very relaxing and therapeutic. But it can be very frustrating if you have to deal with a common garden scavenger – deer.

Deer have always been friendly and beautiful animals that lived forests and rural areas. Now, with the human population moving to these environments, the deer have been forced out of their homes.

But the real problem for the deer is where to eat. On average, a healthy deer needs to consume 5 to 10 pounds of food a day. For a human this doesn't sound like a lot of food. But when it consists of shoots, twigs and leaves, the destruction really adds up. The destruction is called browsing. Browsing is a pattern of feeding in which the deer select tender shoots, twigs, and leaves of ornamental plants, trees and shrubs.

One way to keep deer out of your garden is to put up a fence. This is one of the best ways to protect against deer damage. The fence will need to be at least 8 feet tall. It may seem a little too tall but deer can usually jump a fence any shorter than that if they need to. A fence will also need to be sunk into the ground 1 to 2 feet deep to prevent deer from crawling underneath it.

You can also try using a few lines of heavy fishing line strung from poles. The deer will run into this and be turned off.

Another thing to try is laying chicken wire or plastic netting flat on the ground. The deer do not like walking on it or getting tangled in it and will turn away.



Repellants are another way to prevent deer from coming into your garden. They are made of organic chemicals that will give the plants an odor or a bad taste. When using one of these repellants

you should make sure to read all directions and warnings to be sure that it is right for the plant you are trying to protect. And you should also be very cautious around vegetables, fruits and berries. We can help advise you.

There are also more natural repellants such as dried blood meal, animal urine and human hair. A bar of deodorant soap in a small pouch (such as a nylon stocking) hung on a nearby plant will protect an area of 3 to 4 feet.

Of course, the best way to prevent deer from eating and destroying your garden is to use plants that they simply do not like to eat.

Perennials Deer Don't Like

Achillea millefolium, Yarrow: All colors; flat flowers atop thin green foliage and stems; 2 feet tall; blooms in early-to-late summer



Aquilegia, Columbine: All colors; bell-shaped flowers; average height of 2 feet tall; blooms in spring to summer

Artemisia schmidtiana, Silver mound: Low-growing silver foliage plant; can grow to 1 foot tall; blooms in summer

Asclepias tuberosa, Butterfly Weed: Orange, red, yellow, or a combination of all three; average heights of 2 to 3 feet tall; full sun; blooms in midsummer to fall



Astilbe x ardensii, Hybrid Astilbe: red, white and pink feather-like flowers; 1½ to 4 feet tall; shade; blooms in summer

Centranthus ruber, Red Valerian: Fragrant red, pink and white flowers; average heights of 2 to 3 feet tall; full sun; blooms in spring to late summer

Cimicifuga, Bugbane: White or cream, occasionally pink-tinged; bottlebrush-like flowers atop green or burgundy foliage; average heights from 2 to 6 feet; partial shade; blooms in late summer to fall

Coreopsis lanceolata, Lance Coreopsis: Single bright yellow daisy flower with yellow center; average height of 2 feet tall; full sun; blooms in late spring to midsummer

Delphinium elatum, Larkspur: Blue, purple, pink and white spike flowers atop long stems; dissected leaf; full sun; average heights of 2 to 5 feet tall; blooms in early to midsummer

Digitalis, Foxglove: All colors; many bell-shaped flowers on a tall stem; average height of 3 feet tall; full sun to part shade; blooms in early summer

Echinacea purpurea, Purple Coneflower: Deep pink and white daisy flowers with dark brown centers; average heights of 2 to 3 feet tall; full sun; blooms in summer



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Geranium, Cranesbill: Purple, blue, pink and white; usually saucer-shaped flowers; average heights of 1 to 2 feet tall; shade; blooms in late spring and early summer

Helenium autumnale, Sneezeweed: Orange-red daisy flower with a dark brown center; can grow to 5 feet tall; full sun; blooms late summer to fall

Helleborus, Hellebore/Christmas Rose: White, cream, pink, purple or green saucer, cup or bell-shaped pendulous flowers; average height of 1 foot tall; shade; blooms in late winter to spring

Lychnis coranaria, Rose Campion: Silver-gray foliage plant with a bright fuchsia flower on the tip of the stem; 3 feet tall; full sun; blooms in late summer

Lysmachia clethroides, Gooseneck Loosestrife: Long white flower spikes that curve very slightly at the tip; 3 feet tall; full sun; blooms in mid to late summer

Lythrum salicaria, Purple Loosestrife: Purple-pink spike flower; 4 feet tall; full sun; blooms in midsummer to early fall

Monarda didyma, Bee balm: Each stem bears 1 to 2 whorls of bright red flowers with a dark center; can grow 2 to 3 feet tall; full sun; blooms in late summer

Nepeta, Catmint: Silver-gray foliage plant with mostly blue flowers; average height of 2 to 3 feet tall; full sun to partial shade; blooms in early summer to early fall

Paeonia officinalis, Common Peony: Deep rose or rose-pink cup-shaped flowers with yellow stamens in the center; 2 feet tall; full sun to partial shade; blooms in late spring to early summer



Perovskia x hybrida, Russian Sage: Silver-gray fragrant foliage plant with purple to blue spike flowers on top; average heights of 3 to 5 feet tall; full sun; blooms late summer to early fall

Polemonium caeruleum, Jacob's Ladder: Lavender-blue or white flowers; grows to a height of 12-36 inches tall; mound-forming perennial; prefers part shade; likes moist, well drained soil; blooms late spring and early summer.



Rudbeckia maxima, Black-Eyed Susan: Yellow daisy flower with a dark brown center; 2 to 3 feet tall; full sun; blooms in midsummer to fall

Salvia, Sage: Long purple, blue, red, pink and white flowers; average height is 2 feet tall; full sun; blooms in summer

Santolina, Santolina: Small, round yellow flowers on short green stems; fragrant foliage; average height to 2 feet tall; full sun; blooms in summer

Stachys byzantina, Lambs Ear: Silver leaved foliage plant, can get a purple-pink flower; foliage all season; 12 to 18 inches tall; full sun; flower blooms in early summer to early fall

Thymus vulgaris, common Thyme: Bright purple to white flowers; grows 6-12 inches tall; spreading, cushion-forming perennial; prefers full sun, well-drained neutral-to-alkaline soil; blooms in early summer

Tiarella cordifolia, Foamflower: Vigorous and spreading with white flower spikes; grows 6-8 inches tall with flower spike that can reach 12 inches high; blooms in summer

Veronica, Speedwell: Blue, lavender or white flowers and several variations of foliage shapes and colors; like moist, well drained soil and full sun to part shade

Groundcovers

Groundcovers are low growing, spreading plants usually 18 inches or less that are used to cover large areas with foliage, flowers or both.

- ?? Alchemilla, Lady's Mantle
- ?? Ajuga reptans, Bugle Weed
- ?? Asarum, Wild Ginger
- ?? Bergenia, Bergenia
- ?? Cerastium, Snow in Summer
- ?? Convallaria majalis, Lily of the Valley
- ?? Ferns
- ?? Lamium maculatum, Dead Nettle
- ?? Pachysandra terminalis, Pachysandra
- ?? Potentilla, Potentilla
- ?? Pulmonaria, Lungwort
- ?? Sedum, Sedum
- ?? Sempervirens tectorum, Hens and Chicks
- ?? Vinca minor, Periwinkle/Myrtle

For more information on this topic check out the book

Gardening in Deer Country

by Hicks Nurseries' horticulturist Vinnie Drzewucki, Jr., located in the book department in our Gift Barn.

