

Deer Resistant Perennials

Deer proof plants are something of a relative term. No plants are safe from starving deer. The most deer resistant plants are those that are poisonous, have a milky sap, or gray, fuzzy leaves. While I do not recommend only planting poisonous plants, unless you are Morticia Adams, some of them have a place in the landscape. Poisonous plants are designated with an * in the list.

The remaining plants have been found to be generally resistant to deer attacks, or passed over for better tasting plants in you or your neighbor's yard. The age of the plant will also determine its likelihood to be browsed. Younger plants have more sugars and are far more susceptible. However, if hungry or under extreme population densities, deer will eat just about anything. Also, keep in mind that deer cannot read, and posting this list in your garden is of little use. Even though plants are toxic, young deer may still take a test bite out of your prized plants. I found this to be true when some aconitum were found chewed (which is very rare). Probably a young deer who did not know any better.

The plants in the list are from various sources, but mostly from personal observations in my own yard. At times, I have counted nine deer in my suburban yard. That is deer pressure.

Rabbit proof plants are different and in another section. Generally, rabbits eat more varieties than deer. Rabbit damage can be distinguished by the smooth cutting of the stems, whereas deer leave stems ragged. In addition, woodchucks and other herbivores can also do severe damage.

In addition to planting deer resistant plants, protective sprays or fencing are also effective. I have found that all but the most elaborate fencing will direct the deer away from your yard, much to your neighbors chagrin. One particularly bad year I was forced to completely cover an island bed of phlox and asters (favorite deer chow) with bird netting, taking it off on weekends. Protective sprays are a much better alternative. Products like Tree Guard, Ropel and others give very good protection, if they are applied regularly, especially when the plants are in active growth. I have been able to enjoy tulips again using sprays.

PERENNIALS & FERNS

Achillea	Buddleia	Fallopia	Lupinus	Salvia
Aconitum	Calamintha	Filipendula	Lychnis	Sedum sieboldii
Adiantum	Convallaria	Galium	Matteuccia	Solidago
Agastache	Coreopsis palmata	Geranium	Monarda	Stachys
Alchemilla	Delphinium	Gypsophila	Nepeta	Thymus
Allium	Dicentra spectabilis	Helenium	Osmunda	Tradescantia
Amsonia	Digitalis	Helleborus	Papaver	Veronicastrum
Anemone	Dryopteris	Houttuynia	Phlox divaricata	Vinca
Artemisia	Echinacea	Iris sibirica	Phlox stolonifera	Yucca
Asclepias	Echinops	Lamiastrum	Phlox subulata	
Aster azureus	Epimedium	Lamium	Physostegia	
Astilbe	Eryngium	Lavandula	Polystichum	
Athyrium	Eupatorium	Liatris	Pulmonaria	
Baptisia	Euphorbia	Lobelia	Sagina	

GRASSES

Arrhenatherum	Deschampsia	Helictotrichon	Pennisetum	Sorghastrum
Calamagrostis	Fargesia (Bamboo)	Imperata	Phalaris	Sporobolus
Carex	Festuca	Miscanthus	Pleioblastus (Bamboo)	
Chasmanthium (Uniola)	Hakonechloa	Panicum	Schizachyrium	