



How To Minimize Deer Browsing

We've all experienced frustration at deer eating plants lovingly cared for. That frustration mounts when one spring, deer devour a section of your garden they had ignored for years.

Deer will eat any plant when hungry enough—during a drought period, for example. And fawns will munch on any plant during their quest to find out what's tasty or not. However, implementing a few gardening strategies may minimize deer browsing.

Enclose Your Garden with a Fence

The only deer proof plant is one enclosed by a fence. You can fence individual plants, the trunk of a tree, or an entire garden. Fence height around your garden should be 6.5' or more. Polypropylene or wire mesh and wood are typical fence materials. Wireless deer fences are also available.

Use Deer Resistant Plants

If you're not into fencing, use deer resistant plants. They come with no guarantee that deer will leave them alone, but deer resistant plants are known to be effective in reducing browsing.

These plant characteristics may keep deer in search of something more delectable:

- silvery- or grey-green foliage, such as Sage species (*Artemisia* spp.)
- fuzzy or prickly foliage, such as Golden-aster (*Heterotheca villosa*)
- milky sap, such as Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*)
- a strong sent, such as Nodding Onion (*Allium cernuum*)
- an undesirable taste, such as Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

Design a Deer Resistant Garden

What makes a garden deer resistant? Several things:

1. A garden border of the type of deer resistant plants mentioned above that

"fence" in your other plants, away from deer appetites. Remember though, no plant is deer proof. Deer are known to eat any kind of plant.

2. A garden border of plants you're willing to let deer browse. The strategy here is to satisfy deer with accessible munching in the hopes they'll move on after it.
3. Repellent sprays. Several commercial deer repellent sprays such as Liquid Fence are available at garden and hardware stores. You can also make your own repellents. These highly scented deer-repellent sprays have odors that ward off deer, but not long-term. Deer will adapt to any offensive scent. Have several scented solutions on hand to spray alternately.
4. Use a motion-activated sprinkler.

Implementing these strategies will help you achieve the longer-term effect you're after: plants that hang on to their blooms as nature would have it, not the deer! And as you work to keep deer away from your garden, remember, in some planting seasons, there is payback: Deer leave a section of your garden, consistently munched on year after year, blessedly alone for an entire season.

The Center for Native Plants sells many deer resistant plants. Come visit the nursery - our native plant specialists will help you select appropriate plants.





Most deer resistant species

Keep in mind that the only deer-proof plant is one enclosed by a fence. The list of plants below are known to be deer resistant, but deer will eat any plant when hungry enough, for example in the spring, during a drought, or through a tough winter. Note that in the entire intermountain west, it is proven that these deer resistant species are highly variable dependent on your geographic location.

FORBS

Yarrow
 Horsemint
 Nodding Onion
 Pearly Everlasting
 Rosy Pussytoes
 Heart-leaf Arnica
 Showy Milkweed
 Arrowleaf Balsamroot
 Plains Coreopsis
 Purple Coneflower
 Cutleaf Daisy
 Aspen Fleabane
 Sulphur Buckwheat
 Blanketflower
 Helenium
 Showy Goldeneye
 Hairy Golden Aster
 Alumroot
 Dotted Blazing Star
 Wild Blue Flax
 Lupine Species
 Wild Mint
 Beebalm
 Fuzzy-tongue Penstemon
 Rocky Mountain Beeplant
 Yellow Prairie Coneflower
 Black-eyed Susan
 Stonecrop
 Canada Goldenrod
 Leafy Aster
 Smooth Blue Aster
 Yucca
 Hairy Evening Primrose

Achillea millefolium
Agastache urticifolia
Allium cernuum
Anaphalis margaritacea
Antennaria rosea
Arnica cordifolia
Asclepias speciosa
Balsamorhiza sagittata
Coreopsis tinctoria
Echinacea angustifolia
Erigeron compositus
Erigeron speciosus
Eriogonum umbellatum
Gaillardia aristata
Helenium autumnale
Heliomerus multiflora
Heterotheca villosa
Heuchera cylindrica
Liatris punctata
Linum lewisii
Lupinus spp.
Mentha arvensis
Monarda fistulosa
Penstemon eriantherus
Peritoma serrulata
Ratibida columnifera
Rudbeckia hirta
Sedum stenopelatum
Solidago canadensis
Symphotrichum foliaceum
Symphotrichum laeve
Yucca glauca
Oenothera villosa

SHRUBS

All Sage spp.
 Fernbush
 Black Hawthorn
 Shrubby Cinquefoil
 Rubber Rabbitbrush
 Juniper spp.
 Three-leaved Sumac
 Wax Currant
 Buffaloberry

Artemisia spp.
Chamaebatiaria millefolium
Crataegus douglasii
Dasiphora fruticosa
Ericameria nauseosa
Juniperus spp.
Rhus trilobata
Ribes cereum
Shepherdia canadensis

GROUNDCOVERS

Kinnikinnick
 Oregon-grape
 Birch-leaved Spirea

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi
Berberis repens
Spiraea betulifolia

GRASSES

Most of our grasses are deer resistant. Ask our native plant specialists about which ones aren't and how deer interact with grasses in the winter.

TREES

All birch species
 Douglas Fir
 Engelmann Spruce
 Western Larch

Betula spp.
Pseudotsuga menziesii
Picea engelmannii
Larix occidentalis

View this plant selection guide using your phone:



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