

DEER PROOF GARDENING

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It can be challenging to appreciate the beauty of deer in the Pacific Northwest when our native friends eat our carefully selected and cultivated plants. Dealing with deer is one of the many challenges facing Pacific Northwest gardeners. For many gardeners the main priority is to stop the deer from eating the entire landscape over other gardening afflictions like clay soil and slugs. What can we do about deer? Can we “deer proof” our garden?

First off, there is no exact science to “deer proofing” your garden. ***All plants may be browsed once by deer***, especially by young ones who right now are just starting to roam from home and have not yet learned what tastes best. Certain plants that deer heavily eat in your garden may be left untouched in another’s garden.

We can make it difficult or undesirable for deer to eat our plants. Through scare tactics, repellents, and prevention, one can create a nearly deer proof landscape. To prevent or reduce the incidence of deer browsing we can choose from some of the many plants that deer *tend to avoid*.

WHAT DEER DO

Deer rip or tear leaves when they eat, because of the way their teeth are arranged in their mouth. Rabbits’ teeth are different, in contrast, and they cut leaf parts when they eat. Deer tend to prefer tender, new growth, and leave plants with a shaggy, ragged appearance with torn leaf edges. Deer frequently eat tender new growth in the spring. In the summer deer often eat leaves simply as a source of water. Hedging plants that are palatable to deer, like arborvitae, often have a “narrow middle” resulting from the deer browsing on that part of the hedge.

Deer can also damage plants, especially small trees, by rubbing their antlers on the trunks. This damage usually occurs in the fall as the “fuzz” sheds from their antlers before the mating season. Baby deer are born the following spring. Right now, bambi is starting to roam from home, and will likely eat parts of plants that adult deer would never touch. So to save your garden and landscape from a deer breakfast buffet try scare tactics, repellents or pick plants from the “deer resistant list” below

SCARE TACTICS

A dog that runs free is by far the best scare tactic to keep deer away. Dogs barking and “marking the perimeter” will likely scare away deer. Sometimes even just one dog in the hood will keep the deer away from many homes. Also at your disposal are *motion sensing sprinklers* that scare deer away by shooting out a stream of water when deer are nearby.

Deer do not have particularly good vision, but they are very adept and sensing movement. Another somewhat effective scare tactic is hanging strips of mylar or old cds from trees. The reflected light and motion scare the deer.

REPELLENTS

There are two basic kinds of deer repellents: *area repellents* and *contact repellents*.

Area repellents are applied to *an area* to discourage deer from entering that area. Often these are granular products that are sprinkled around the area needing protection. Plants with fragrant and aromatic foliage (e.g. rosemary, lavender, juniper) often confuse deer and/or deter them. Members of the genus *Allium* (e.g. chives, garlic, onions, scallions, shallots, ornamental onions) irritate deer. When interplanted among other plants (e.g. roses, tulips) *Alliums* tend to deter deer browsing.

Contact repellents are often liquid products with a horrible taste that are applied directly to foliage to deter deer browsing. Deer prefer tender, new growth, so be sure to apply in spring as plants grow new leaves. When applying repellents be sure to cover plants thoroughly. Also remember to reapply repellents, because their effectiveness won't last forever in our rainy climate. For your vegetable garden be sure to select a deer repellent suitable for edible plants. *Read the entire label before using!* Human hair, dog hair, or even cat hair works well as a deer repellent when placed around the base of plants or hanging in branches.

Deer are creatures of habit. They often have a particular trail that they like to follow when visiting your landscape. If you can use repellents, alliums, or hair in the path, deer will often be confused and try another route. If you continue to confuse them each time they select a new path, they often will choose to avoid your garden all together.

PREVENTION

A fence is a great way to exclude deer from particular areas of your landscape or even your entire property. Of course, the main drawback of a deer fence is the cost. If you want to construct a deer fence, consider the following.

Deer fences must be over 6 feet tall. Deer can and will easily jump over a 5-6 foot fence. However, deer tend to not jump fences that they cannot see through. Also deer tend to not jump over a fence that encloses a really small space, like a small 4' x 4' vegetable garden. Deer fences must also touch to the ground. Deer have been seen crawling under fences with as little as an 8" gap at the bottom. So be sure your deer fence goes all the way to the ground!

Another great preventative for reducing deer browsing is to select plants that deer *tend to avoid*. Knowing which plants deer really like to eat is also essential.

PLANTS THAT DEER LOVE TO EAT

Deer *really* like to eat these plants. If you absolutely must have these plants, be sure to use a repellent or have scare tactic ready at hand!

TREES & SHRUBS

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Botanical Name</u>
Redbud	<i>Cercis</i>
Any kind of Dogwood	<i>Cornus spp.</i>
Smoke Bush	<i>Cotinus</i>
Escallonia	<i>Escallonia</i>
Burning Bush	<i>Euonymus alata</i>
Euonymus	<i>Euonymus</i>
Witch Hazel	<i>Hamamelis</i>
Hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea</i>
Apple & Crabapple	<i>Malus</i>
Red Tip Photinia	<i>Photinia</i>
Cherry (flowering, fruiting)	<i>Prunus</i>
English Laurel	<i>Prunus</i>
Portuguese Laurel	<i>Prunus</i>
Otto Luyken Laurel	<i>Prunus</i>
Pear	<i>Pyrus</i>
Azalea (new growth tips)	<i>Rhododendron</i>
Rose – most kinds	<i>Rosa</i>
Arborvitae	<i>Thuja</i>
Any Thuja species or cultivar	<i>Thuja</i>

ANNUALS & PERENNIALS

Daylily	<i>Hemerocallis</i>
Heuchera	<i>Heuchera</i>
Hosta	<i>Hosta</i>
Upright phlox	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>
Zonal Geraniums	<i>Pelargonium</i>
Solomon's Seal	<i>Polygonatum</i>
Upright Sedum	<i>Sedum spectabile</i>
Tulip	<i>Tulipa</i>

Deer also love most plants in your veggie garden, e.g. lettuce, beans, etc.

DEER RESISTANT PLANTS

Remember that there are very few plants that deer *never* eat. Any plant may be browsed once, especially by young deer. Furthermore, one bite may be enough to ruin the season for that plant, e.g tulips. Regular deer browsing may not kill a plant, but the plant may remain unshapely and ragged looking for years. For best results use a deer repellent and select from this list of deer resistant plants....

TREES

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Botanical Name</u>
White Fir	<i>Abies concolor</i>
Maples	<i>Acer</i>
Silk tree	<i>Albizia</i>
Tree Aralia	<i>Aralia elata</i>
Monkey Puzzle Tree	<i>Araucaria araucana</i>
Madrona	<i>Arctostaphylos</i>
Birch	<i>Betula</i>
Incense Cedar	<i>Calocedrus decurrens</i>
Catalpa	<i>Catalpa</i>
Deodar Cedar	<i>Cedrus deodora</i>
Hinoki Cypress	<i>Chamaecyparis</i>
Persimmon	<i>Diospyros</i>
Eucalyptus	<i>Eucalyptus</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus</i>
Walnut	<i>Juglans</i>
All Junipers	<i>Juniper</i>
Sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar</i>
All Spruces	<i>Picea</i>
All Pines	<i>Pinus</i>
Douglas Fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>
Oak	<i>Quercus</i>
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus</i>

SHRUBS

Vine Maple	<i>Acer circinatum</i>
Strawberry Tree	<i>Arbutus unedo</i>
Barberry	<i>Berberis</i>
Butterfly Bush	<i>Buddleia</i>
Boxwood	<i>Buxus</i>
Summer Heather	<i>Calluna</i>
Spicebush	<i>Calycanthus</i>
Caryopteris/Blue Beard	<i>Caryopteris</i>
California Lilac	<i>Ceanothus</i>
Bittersweet	<i>Celastrus</i>
Flowering Quince	<i>Chaenomeles</i>
Hinoki Cypress	<i>Chamaecyparis</i>
Mexican Orange	<i>Choysia ternata</i>

Rock Rose	<i>Cistus</i>
Corokia	<i>Corokia cotoneaster</i>
Hazelnut	<i>Corylus</i>
Cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster</i>
Cypress	<i>Cupressus</i>
Daphne	<i>Daphne</i>
Eleagnus	<i>Eleagnus</i>
Winter Heather	<i>Erica</i>
Japanese Aralia	<i>Fatsia japonica</i>
Forsythia	<i>Forsythia</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex</i>
Juniper	<i>Juniper</i>
Mountain Laurel	<i>Kalmia</i>
Kerria	<i>Kerria japonica</i>
Beauty Bush	<i>Kolkwitzia</i>
Golden Chain Tree	<i>Laburnum</i>
Larch	<i>Larix</i>
Bay Laurel	<i>Laurus nobilis</i>
Leucothoe	<i>Leucothoe</i>
Privet	<i>Ligustrum</i>
Spice Bush	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>
Box Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera nitida</i>
Magnolia	<i>Magnolia</i>
Oregon Grape	<i>Mahonia spp.</i>
Heavenly Bamboo,	<i>Nandina spp.</i>
Lily of the Valley Shrub	<i>Pieris spp.</i>
Potentilla	<i>Potentilla</i>
Firethorn	<i>Pyracantha</i>
Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron</i>
Rugosa Rose	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>
Sweet Box/Sarcococca	<i>Sarcococca</i>
Spiraea	<i>Spiraea</i>
Lilac	<i>Syringa spp.</i>
Huckleberry	<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i>
Burkwood Viburnum	<i>Viburnum burkwoodii</i>
David Viburnum	<i>Viburnum davidii</i>
Spr. Bouquet Viburnum	<i>Viburnum tinus</i>
Wisteria	<i>Wisteria</i>
Yucca	<i>Yucca</i>

PERENNIALS

Yarrow	<i>Achillea</i>
Monkshood	<i>Aconitum</i>
Bugbane	<i>Actaea/Cimicifuga</i>
Anise Hyssop	<i>Agastache</i>
Bugleweed	<i>Ajuga</i>

Allium, Garlic, Chives	<i>Allium</i>
Japanese Anemone	<i>Anemone</i>
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia</i>
Rock Cress	<i>Arabis & Aubrieta</i>
Artemisia	<i>Artemisia</i>
Wormwood	<i>Artemisia</i>
Tarragon	<i>Artemisia dracuncululus</i>
Bergenia	<i>Bergenia</i>
Boltonia	<i>Boltonia asteroides</i>
Bellflower, Campanula	<i>Campanula</i>
Bachelor Button	<i>Centaurea montana</i>
Snow in Summer	<i>Cerastium tomentosum</i>
Turtlehead	<i>Chelone</i>
Mums	<i>Chrysanthemum</i>
Bugbane	<i>Cimicifuga/Actaea</i>
Lily of the Valley	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>
Cyclamen	<i>Cyclamen</i>
Delphinium/Larkspur	<i>Delphinium</i>
Dianthus, Carnation	<i>Dianthus</i>
Sweet William	<i>Dianthus</i>
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis</i>
Globe Thistle	<i>Echinops</i>
Bishop's Hat	<i>Epimedium</i>
Euphorbia	<i>Euphorbia</i>
Fennel, Bronze fennel	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>
Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula</i>
Wild Strawberry	<i>Fragaria</i>
Sweet Woodruff	<i>Galium</i>
Salal, Wintergreen	<i>Gaultheria</i>
Gunnera	<i>Gunnera</i>
Jerusalem Artichoke	<i>Helianthus tuberosus</i>
Hellebore, Lenten Rose	<i>Helleborus</i>
St. John's Wort	<i>Hypericum</i>
Candytuft	<i>Iberis</i>
Iris-Bearded, Siberian	<i>Iris</i>
Lavender	<i>Lavandula</i>
Shasta Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum</i>
Toadflax	<i>Linaria</i>
Blue Flax, perennial flax	<i>Linum</i>
Lithodora	<i>Lithodora</i>
Lupine	<i>Lupinus</i>
Rose Campion	<i>Lychnis coronaria</i>
Mints	<i>Mentha</i>
Bee Balm	<i>Monarda</i>
Forget Me Nots	<i>Myosotis</i>
Catnip	<i>Nepeta cataria</i>

Catmint	<i>Nepeta</i>
Basil	<i>Ocimum</i>
Oregano	<i>Origanum</i>
Iceland Poppy	<i>Papaver nudicaule</i>
Oriental Poppy	<i>Papaver orientale</i>
New Zealand Flax	<i>Phormium</i>
Balloon Flower	<i>Platycodon</i>
Rhubarb	<i>Rheum</i>
Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus</i>
Sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>
Lavender Cotton	<i>Santolina</i>
Soapwort	<i>Saponaria</i>
Potato	<i>Solanum tuberosum</i>
Germander	<i>Teucrium</i>
Thyme	<i>Thymus</i>
Windmill Palm	<i>Trachycarpus fortunei</i>
Mullein, Verbascum	<i>Verbascum</i>
Calla Lily	<i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i>

BULBS (CORMS, TUBERS, etc...)

Allium, Garlic, Chives	<i>Allium</i>
Colchicum	<i>Colchicum</i>
Lily of the Valley	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>
Crocsmia, Montbretia	<i>Crocsmia</i>
Crocus	<i>Crocus</i>
Dahlia	<i>Dahlia</i>
Snowdrop	<i>Galanthus</i>
Gladiola	<i>Gladiolus</i>
Iris-Bearded, Siberian	<i>Iris</i>
Daffodil/Narcissus	<i>Narcissus</i>

ANNUALS

Ageratum	<i>Ageratum</i>
Snapdragon	<i>Antirrhinum</i>
Wax/Fibrous Begonia	<i>Begonia</i>
Angel's Trumpet	<i>Brugmansia</i>
Bachelor Buttons	<i>Centaurea</i>
Larkspur	<i>Consolida ambigua</i>
Datura	<i>Datura</i>
Dracaena	<i>Dracaena/Cordyline</i>
California Poppy	<i>Eschsholzia</i>
Sunflower	<i>Helianthus</i>
Strawflower	<i>Helichrysum</i>
Heliotrope	<i>Heliotropium</i>
Impatiens	<i>Impatiens</i>
Toadflax, Linaria	<i>Linaria</i>

Lobelia	<i>Lobelia erinus</i>
Scented Geranium	<i>Pelargonium</i>
Geranium	<i>Pelargonium</i>
Petunia	<i>Petunia</i>
Calla Lily	<i>Zantedeschia</i>
Zinnia	<i>Zinnia</i>

MOST ORNAMENTAL GRASSES, AND SEDGES ARE DEER RESISTANT:

Festuca, *Carex*, Blue Oat Grass, Black Mondo Grass, *Miscanthus*, *Calamagrostis*, etc.

MOST COMMON GROUNDCOVERS ARE DEER RESISTANT:

Kinnikinnick, Salal, Wintergreen, Creeping Thyme, Ivy, Vinca, Oregon Grape, Lithodora, Pachysandra, etc.

ALL FERNS TEND TO BE DEER RESISTANT

Sword Fern, Deer Fern, Japanese Painted Fen, Maidenhair Fern, Alaska Fern, Tassel Fern, Lady Fern, etc...