

# Plants Not Favored by Deer

Based on information compiled from the Morton Arboretum, Bailey Nurseries, American Nurseryman Magazine, and the experience of Finke Gardens staff members

There are few things more frustrating for gardeners than having deer dine on cherished plants. Increased populations of white-tailed deer and reduction of their natural habitat have forced deer into home landscapes where palatable ornamental plants become alternative food sources. When winter approaches and food sources are less available, feeding on leaves, stems, and buds of landscape plants becomes more apparent. Male deer also cause damage by rutting or rubbing their antlers along the stems or trunks of trees and stripping off bark.

Deer should be discouraged immediately when they appear. Young trees and shrubs can suffer permanent damage from deer browsing. Deer damage is usually identified by the torn or jagged appearance of branches or twigs compared to the clean-cut feeding damage caused by rabbits and squirrels. Here are four basic options to help you control deer in your garden:

- **Barriers-** Physically restrict deer by enclosing your entire yard or garden in fencing at least six feet tall. If you only have a few trees or shrubs to protect, fence around these individual plants. Expense and aesthetics are the major drawbacks to this option.
- **Repellents-** Homemade and commercial repellents are common control methods to discourage deer, but their effectiveness is based on several factors. Most have a bitter taste or foul odor, discouraging deer from feeding. Snow and rainfall can wash off some materials so reapplication is frequently needed. If food sources are scarce, deer may simply ignore the repellents, despite the taste or odor.
- **Deterrents-** A large, noisy dog is a good deer deterrent. If you don't have a dog, you can hang shiny tape or strips from branches, or place inflated balls, whirly-gigs, or other moving objects in the yard to startle deer with sudden movement. You'll have to rotate these frequently, however, or deer will soon realize that they are not in danger from these objects.
- **Deer-resistant plants-** If they are hungry and food is scarce enough, deer will eat almost anything. However, there are a number of plants that deer don't find particularly palatable. Using these plants in your landscape is often the most cost-effective, least time-consuming, and most attractive solution.

We offer a list of trees and shrubs not favored by deer. However, deer-browsing preferences may change with fluctuations in deer populations, alternative food availability, and environmental factors. It is also important to note that a plant may be resistant to browsing, no plant is resistant to deer rutting their antlers on the branches.

## Trees

*Betula spp.*

*Castanea mollissima*

*Catalpa speciosa*

*Cercis canadensis*

*Fagus spp.*

*Fraxinus spp.*

*Ginkgo biloba*

Birch

Chinese Chestnut

Northern Catalpa

Eastern Redbud

Beech

Ash

Ginkgo

*Liquidambar styraciflua*

*Liriodendron tulipifera*

*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*

*Ostrya virginiana*

*Platanus spp.*

*Syringa reticulata*

*Taxodium distichum*

Sweetgum

Tuliptree

Dawn Redwood

Ironwood

Planetree

Japanese Tree Lilac

Baldcypress



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**Shrubs**

<i>Aesculus parviflora</i>	Bottlebrush Buckeye
<i>Berberis spp.</i>	Barberry
<i>Buddleia spp.</i>	Butterflybush
<i>Buxus spp.</i>	Boxwood
<i>Callicarpa dichotoma</i>	Beautyberry
<i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	Sweetshrub
<i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i>	Caryopteris
<i>Cotinus coggyria</i>	Purple Smoketree
<i>Forsythia spp.</i>	Forsythia
<i>Hamamelis spp.</i>	Witchhazel
<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Spicebush
<i>Kerria japonica</i>	Japanese Kerria
<i>Myrica pennsylvania</i>	Northern Bayberry
<i>Spiraea spp.</i>	Spirea
<i>Symphoricarpus albus</i>	Snowberry
<i>Symphoricarpus x chenaultii</i>	Coralberry
<i>Syringa spp.</i>	Lilac
<i>Yucca spp.</i>	Yucca

**Vines**

<i>Celastrus scandens</i>	Bittersweet Vine
<i>Clematis spp.</i>	Clematis
<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Honeysuckle Vine
<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>	Wisteria

**Conifers**

<i>Juniperus spp.</i>	Juniper
<i>Picea abies</i>	Norway Spruce
<i>Picea pungens</i>	Colorado Spruce
<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	Douglasfir

**Perennials**

<i>Achillia spp.</i>	Yarrow
<i>Ajuga spp.</i>	Ajuga, Bugleweed
<i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	Lady's Mantle
<i>Amsonia hubrichtii</i>	Blue Star Amsonia
<i>Aquilegia spp.</i>	Columbine
<i>Artemesia spp.</i>	Wormwood
<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly Milkweed
<i>Aster spp.</i>	Aster
<i>Athyrium nipponicum 'Pictum'</i>	Japanese Painted Fern
<i>Baptesia spp.</i>	False Indigo
<i>Brunnera macrophylla</i>	Siberian Bugloss
<i>Campanula spp.</i>	Bell Flower
<i>Cerastium tomentosum</i>	Snow in Summer
<i>Chelone spp.</i>	Turtle's Head
<i>Coreopsis spp.</i>	Coreopsis

<i>Dianthus spp.</i>	Dianthus
<i>Dicentra spp.</i>	Bleeding Heart
<i>Epimedium spp.</i>	Barrenwort
<i>Gallium odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruff
<i>Geranium spp.</i>	Hardy Geranium
<i>Heleborus orientalis</i>	Lenten Rose
<i>Helianthus spp.</i>	False Sunflower
<i>Heuchera spp.</i>	Choral Bells
<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	Perennial Hibiscus
<i>Iris spp.</i>	Iris
<i>Lamium spp.</i>	Lamium
<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Lavender
<i>Liatris spp.</i>	Blazing Star, Gay Feather
<i>Monarda spp.</i>	Beebalm
<i>Nepeta spp.</i>	Catmint
<i>Oenothera spp.</i>	Evening Primrose
<i>Pachysandra spp.</i>	Japanese Spurge
<i>Paeonia spp.</i>	Peony
<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>	Russian Sage
<i>Pulmonaria spp.</i>	Lungwort
<i>Rudbeckia spp.</i>	Black-eyed Susan
<i>Salvia spp.</i>	Various sages
<i>Sedum spp.</i>	Sedum, Stonecrop
<i>Solidago spp.</i>	Goldenrod
<i>Stachys byzantina</i>	Lamb's Ear
<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	Foam Flower
<i>Vinca minor</i>	Periwinkle

**Grasses**

<i>Arundo donax</i>	Giant Reed Grass
<i>Calamagrostis spp.</i>	Feather Reed Grass
<i>Carex spp.</i>	Sedges
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>	Northern Sea Oats
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i>	Maiden Grass
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switch Grass
<i>Pennisetum spp.</i>	Fountain Grass
<i>Saccharum ravenae</i>	Ravenna Grass
<i>Sporpobolus spp.</i>	Dropseed

**Bulbs**

<i>Allium spp.</i>	Ornamental Onion
<i>Chionodoxa spp.</i>	Glory of the Snow
<i>Colchicum spp.</i>	Autumn Crocus
<i>Galanthus spp.</i>	Snowdrop
<i>Leucojum spp.</i>	Snowflake
<i>Muscari spp.</i>	Grape Hyacinth
<i>Narcissus spp.</i>	Daffodil