

GARDENING AROUND DEER

By Leslie Anderson

Other than fencing, no single tip will work alone!

-Deer don't visually recognize which plant they want to eat; **they smell to determine which plants to eat**. Like a pungent perfume, the strong smelling plant odor will stay in the deer's nose when it smells the plant next to it. This is called "**Camouflage Gardening**". Outline your garden with strong smelling plants or plant strong smelling plants next to plants with no fragrance. I love thyme as a ground cover and I always surround daylilies with yarrow. With deer it is easy to grow an herb garden but tough to grow a vegetable garden. Many people will plant marigolds and the deer eat them. Not all marigolds have fragrance! Rub and smell leaves on plants before purchasing them.

-If not sure whether the deer will eat a plant, buy just one. Place that plant (still in the pot) where deer frequent. If the deer eat it, only plant in a fenced part of your yard. If the deer don't eat it, buy more!

-If deer are eating just the blooms from a plant but not the leaves, spray on repellants work great. Tagawa Gardens sells several good **odor repellants** (Bobbex, Messina, Liquid Fence & hot pepper wax). If possible, spray the back of a bloom or just below the bloom so you don't repel the pollinators.

-**Use organic fertilizers**. Synthetic fertilizers may cause quick growth. That new growth is tender & tasty. Many plants coming from nurseries may be eaten at first, but eventually be left alone if fertilized organically.

-Placing pieces of chicken wire flat on the ground near a plant will spook deer (or any mammal). When the deer step on the wire it shakes and spooks them. Don't forget to pick up the chicken wire before mowing the grass.

-Certain plants seem to be **deer magnets**. Forget growing tulips (try daffodils), roses, vegetables or aspen trees unless you put them in a fenced area.

-Consider native plants. Many are pungent and have adapted to deer and other wildlife.

-A buck can jump a 6' fence. So a deer fence may need to be up to 8' tall. **Deer won't jump a fence** if they can't see what is on the other side or even if there is a place to land. So a 6' privacy fence may work.

In the **winter** things change. I let the deer eat my leftover flowers (less spring cleaning for me). If hungry enough (especially in late winter), deer will eat evergreen plants that are small and within reach. The males also mark their territories by rubbing their antlers against bushes & smaller trees. Surround small trees with metal poles that have chicken wire attached. This

fencing may stay around the trees until they are large enough that the deer will not be able to get their antlers around the trunk.

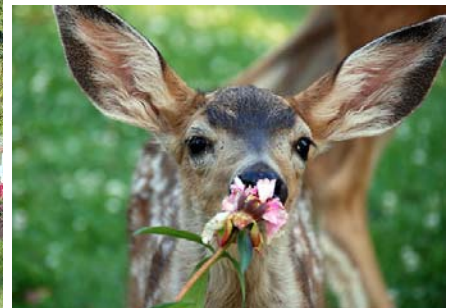
There are many lists of plants that deer aren't supposed to eat. These lists are not a guarantee. If you use plants on this list but use synthetic fertilizers and lots of magnet plants...they will eat even the most fragrant plant.

Here are a few of my favorite plants:

- Yarrow (drought tolerant, long blooming, full sun, tons of colors)
- Catmint (drought tolerant, long blooming, spreads)
- Thyme (drought tolerant, great groundcover, short lived blooms)
- Agastache (drought tolerant, sweet smelling leaves, long blooming, hummingbirds love)
- Artemisia (drought tolerant, great accent plant, silver color)
- Salvia (drought tolerant, long blooming, hummingbirds love)
- Iris (medium-low water, easy to grow, tons of colors)
- Oranmental Grasses (many choices in light, water needs & colors)
- Rudbeckia/ Brown-eyed Susans (low water, long blooming)
- Purple coneflower (medium water, birds & butterflies like)

Talk to neighbors, smell plants, fertilize organically and make your own list.

Deer Eating Flowers



Antler Rub & Fencing of Individual Tree/shrub

