



Swan River Gardens

The Buck Doesn't Stop Here

You hear them called many names, some nice, some not so nice. Science calls them *Odocoileus virginianus*; you know them as Whitetail Deer, the bane of gardeners nationwide. It can feel as though you rang a dinner bell and put out the good silver when you see their handiwork. The question 'what can I do about deer' is the single most asked in garden centers, gardening classes and any other venue that involves outdoor plants. After the laughter subsides, you may get several different answers but some general guidelines apply.

To start, never feed deer. Even when it's cold, even when it's a doe with a fawn, even when it seems like the right thing to do, you are teaching them to associate your property with food. And miss one mealtime with the food you choose and they will assume you want them to choose those great flowers you just planted! A deer that gets a dinner from a birdfeeder one or two times won't become habituated if you withdraw the food for a few days. But a deer that gets grain, corn or hay on a regular basis will take up residence nearby and expect a daily handout. You just have to run out once to rue ever feeding these marauders after they browse through your garden plantings. Wildlife managers will tell you that deer have little or no trouble finding food and do not need your handouts. If you are serious about having a nicely landscaped property and do not want the headache of deer damage, start by avoiding the temptation to feed them. Gently encourage neighbors to do the same.

Select plants that offer some deer resistance. Deer are such a problem you will see these kinds of plants marketed specifically as such. Note that no plants should be referred to as deer 'proof', no such plant exists. Deer resistant means deer may not find these plants as tasty as others. Look for shrubs like Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Mock Orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*) and Potentilla (*Potentilla fruticosa*). While they are not bulletproof and you may find someone who has had deer munch them down, they are not usually on the preferred first course. Perennials like Foxglove (*Digitalis*), Sticky Geranium (*Geranium macrorrhizum*) and Meadow Sage (*Salvia*) can be counted on to remain standing through the season. For annual container plantings, look for Bacopa (*Sutera*), Lantana (*Lantana*) or Marigolds (*Tagetes*). On the reverse of this sheet is the Swan River Gardens list of deer resistant plants that you can take along as you shop.

Use deer repellent products. Which one? Well, if you ever find one that works 100% of the time, invest heavily with plans to retire soon and rich. Swan River Gardens offers several brands. Most of these products use the same general formula, a scent or taste based deterrent that involves rotten meat, eggs or similar foul ingredients. Some products do offer rain resistance so they do not have to be continuously applied. Remember that automated sprinkler systems mimic rain and can wash off even the most durable products in less time than you may realize. While no one product is recognized to work better than another, switching them over time seems to work the best. That way the deer do not become accustomed to one or the other and are deterred for longer periods. After a few sprays during the season many gardeners are finding that spraying the perimeter of their property where deer enter can be effective once an initial impression is made of 'no food here'.

Finally there is one defense that can be said to be 100% effective 100% of the time. Fencing at least eight feet high will keep deer away from gardens. While fencing may not be suitable for all properties or homeowners, sometimes fencing specific areas like a vegetable garden where sprays are not usable is the only way to go.

Whitetail deer. From coast to coast they are the one kind of critter everyone can count on for good things like knowing you live in a place with wildlife and bad things like garden headaches because you live in a place with wildlife. Make up as many names for them as you like but they won't be going away anytime soon.

Deer Resistant Plant List

Perennials

Achillea	Yarrow
Aconitum	Monkshood
Ageratum	Snow on the Mountain
Ajuga	Bugleweed
Aquilegia	Columbine
Artemisia	Artemisia
Aster	Aster
Astilbe	Astilbe
Campanula	Bellflowers
Centaurea	Cornflower
Centranthus	Jupiter's Beard
Cerastium	Snow in Summer
Coreopsis	Coreopsis
Dicentra	Bleeding Hearts
Digitalis	Foxglove
Echinacea	Coneflower
Euphorbia	Cushion Spurge
Ferns	Ferns
Galium	Sweet Woodruff
Geraniums	Hardy Geraniums
Grasses	Ornamental Grasses
Hemerocallis	Daylily
Iris	Iris
Lamium	Lamium
Lavandula	Lavender
Lupinus	Lupine
Monarda	Bee Balm
Myosotis	Forget Me Not
Narcissus	Daffodils
Pachysandra	Japanese Spurge
Papaver	Poppies
Penstemon	Penstemon
Phlox subulata	Creeping Phlox
Rudbeckia	Black Eye Susan
Salvia	Meadow Sage
Scabiosa	Pincushion Flower
Thymus	Thyme
Veronica	Veronica
Vinca minor	Myrtle or Periwinkle

Shrubs

Berberis	Barberry
Buddleia	Butterfly Bush
Buxus	Boxwood
Chamaecyparis	False Cypress
Clematis	Clematis
Cotoneaster	Cotoneaster
Daphne	Daphne
Elaeagnus	Russian Olive
Ilex	Holly
Juniperus	Juniper
Mahonia	Oregon Grape
Picea	Spruce
Pinus	Pine
Potentilla	Potentilla
Rhus	Sumac
Ribes	Alpine Currant
Syringa	Lilac

Trees

Crataegus	Hawthorne
Fraxinus	Ash
Juniper	Juniper
Picea	Spruce
Pinus	Pine

Annuals

Brachycome	Swan River Daisy
Marigold	Marigold
Rosemary	Rosemary
Scaevola	Scaevola
Verbena	Verbena
Vinca major	Vinca major
Zinnia	Zinnia

Please note that Deer RESISTANT does not mean Deer PROOF. We make no such claim for the plants on this list. It is a general guide and should be used as such.