

List of deer resistant plants to try

Shrubs

Abelia (many varieties) – prefers FS, some tolerate shade, many varieties to choose. Usually flower in the summer, attract butterflies. Many are low growers, can be evergreen or deciduous. Avoid shearing to obtain best flowering.

American Beautyberry (Callicarpa dichonata) – FS or light shade. Produces purple fruit on stem in late summer that the birds enjoy. Fruits on new growth, so prune in late winter.

Butterfly bush (Buddleia) – prefer FS, but will take a little shade. Most are deciduous. Several color choices but purple is the most hardy. Hummingbird and butterfly magnet. Prune back last season's growth in late winter.

Clethra – PS, but avoid hot afternoon sun. Does best in moist, slightly acid soil. Nice flowers in spring.

Gardenia - FS or PS, evergreen, with wonderful, sweet-smelling flowers in spring and summer, but watch for pests – horticultural oils are usually effective controls. Likes some shade in the afternoon here. They need slightly acidic soil and plenty of nutrients to make beautiful flowers.

Loropetulum (Chinese fringe) – evergreen, likes some shade from the afternoon sun. Pink flowers in the spring. They can grow quite large so if space is an issue look for dwarf varieties. Some varieties have white flowers. Foliage is also attractive; most common forms have reddish tones.

Ligustrum (Privet) – FS or PS - Occasionally browsed by deer (especially new growth) but mine have survived with use of repellent sprays. Numerous varieties, most are evergreen. Some have curly leaves, others variegated, so you can use throughout landscape. Size varies with variety.

Mahonia – Light requirements depend on the variety selected, evergreen and prickly leaves are not attractive to deer. Interesting showy flowers and fruit, very easy care. They can grow large so choose a variety to fit your landscape.

Nandina - prefers sun, but will tolerate some shade. Evergreen and deciduous varieties, many with interesting foliage and fruit. Some varieties will grow quite large so, again, choose the correct one for your landscape.

Oleander (Nerium oleander) – FS, protect from winter winds and provide mulch around the roots. If it experiences winter kill it will grow back – just cut down to about one foot off of the ground. It is poisonous to eat but it is safe to touch. Several choices in flower color – flowers in the late spring.

Osmanthus (Tea olive) – FS or PS, evergreen, some varieties have a sweet, smelling flower and interesting foliage. Some varieties can grow quite tall. Goshiki is a nice holly-looking dwarf with variegated leaves.

Wax Myrtle (Myrica cerifera) – evergreen shrub, can be shaped like a tree. Great for screening, grows quite tall so place where it has space to grow for best performance. Can find dwarf varieties. Prefers FS but will tolerate some shade. Native to Southeast.

Perennials/annuals

Angel's trumpet (Brugmansia) – FS, very showy flowers, easy to grow but needs winter protection here. – bring indoors or cover to protect from cold temperatures.

Angelonia – FS, blooms all summer, likes heat. May not be winter hardy here. Likes deadheading to continue blooming.

Artemesia – FS, mostly useful for foliage, lots of choices with interesting leaf color and shapes, drought tolerant, many are evergreen.

Agastache – FS or PS, members of mint family so their smell offends deer. Hummingbirds love them. Lots of interesting colors. Need good drainage to do well.

Aster – FS, easy to grow, lots of color and size choices, blooms in late summer and fall. Deer will sometimes browse.

Astilbe – Full or part shade, too hot here for them to be in sun. Need moist soil with plenty of organic matter to thrive.

Baptista – FS, become large clumps and do not like transplanting. Flowers resemble sweet-pea. Deadhead for reblooming.

Bee Balm (Monarda didyma) – FS or PS, member of mint family so usually safe from deer, but can be invasive. Lots of color choice.

Columbine (Aquilegia) – FS or light shade, need well-drained soil, to extend life allow self-seeding

Dahlia – FS, but does best with some afternoon shade. Many color choices, some varieties have very large flowers, staking is best for these as the blooms are very large and heavy. Removing spent flowers encourages re-blooming.

Dusty miller (Senecio cineraria) – FS or PS, needs regular shearing to keep from getting too leggy. Fuzzy, grey leaves and yellow flowers – makes a nice contrast in the flower bed.

Foxglove (Digitalis) – light shade, spent flowers need to be removed to encourage re-blooming. Attracts hummingbirds. Poisonous so do not eat.

Ginger lily (Hedychium) – FS or light shade. Wonderful sweet smelling flower in late summer on tall green stalks. Likes nutrient rich soil.

Lenton rose (Helleborus) – Full or part shade. Blooms in winter through early spring. Don't like to be moved so pick a good spot and leave them there.

Lamb's ears (Stachys byzantine) – FS or light shade, another opportunity for different color in the garden – grey fuzzy leaves, blooms in the spring. Easy to grow, but good drainage is needed.

Lantana – FS, available in many color choices, although all are not winter hardy. Some hybrids may be more attractive to deer. Majority should be okay.

Milkweed (Asclepas) – FS, easy to grow, beautiful blooms, butterfly magnets (especially monarchs), don't like to be moved due to taproot.

Sage (Salvia) - FS, lots of color and style choices here, from short to tall, with flowers in many colors. Removing spent flowers encourages new blooms. Benefit from pruning if plants get too large.

Yarrow (Achillea) – FS, once established are drought tolerant, but they good drainage. After bloom, cut back.

Grasses – most are not browsed by deer, many varieties to select. Here are several choices:

Silver grass (Miscanthus) – FS or PS – many varieties of varying color and size to choose from, and most have very attractive foliage.

Fountain grass (Pennisetum) – FS or PS, some are annuals in zone 8, so look for one that is hardy here if you want it to come back. Many varieties to choose.

Sedges (Carex) – FS, but some shade in the afternoon is best. Many varieties to choose, generally shorter than true grasses.

Muhly grass (Muhlenbergia) – FS or light shade, look better if given supplemental water. Adequate drainage is essential. M. capillaris (pink muhly grass) is very attractive when it blooms in the fall.

Japanese sweet flag (Acorus gramineus) – light shade, most happy in moist soil

Mexican feather grass (Nasella tenuissima) – FS, very feathery stems. Not too tall, drought tolerant

Ground covers

Pachysandra – partial to full shade. Do well around tree roots. Need well drained soil with plenty of organic matter.

Creeping Jenny (Lysimachia) – FS or PS, can be invasive if conditions are good. Great addition to pots.

Periwinkle (Vinca minor) – partial to full shade. Very easy to grow. Best to avoid Vinca major though, long trailing vines that become tripping hazards.

Creeping juniper (Juniperus horizontalis) – tolerates FS better than other choices in this list.

Herbs - Most are resistant to deer damage, so mix in with your perennials for variety. Some good examples include:

Rosemary

Oregano

Thyme

Lavender

Basil

