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Deer Resistant Plants

We're not so bold as to declare these plants "deer proof," for in extreme circumstances deer will eat almost anything. It's very hard to pinpoint what deer will eat. Just correlate to humans: you wouldn't think pigs' feet and snails' eggs would be targets, but some people will eat them. Deer may not be culinary connoisseurs, but they do have favorite foods, and they do avoid others. Sharp foliage, thorns, hairy leaves, or a peculiar taste keep these plants off the normal menu.

Perennials:

<i>Achillea</i> spp.	Yarrow
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugleweed
<i>Agastache</i> spp.	Hyssop
<i>Artemisia</i> spp.	Wormwood
<i>Bergenia cord.</i>	Saxifraga
<i>Boltonia aster.</i>	False Chamomile
<i>Buddleia</i> spp.	Butterfly Bush
<i>Ceratostigma</i>	Leadwort
<i>Convallaria</i>	Lily of the Valley
<i>Coreopsis</i> spp.	Tickseed
<i>Dicentra</i> spp.	Bleeding Heart
<i>Digitalis</i> spp.	Foxglove
<i>Eupatorium</i> spp.	Joe Pye Weed
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruff
<i>Iris germanica</i>	Iris
<i>Kniphofia</i>	Red Hot Poker
<i>Lavandula</i> spp.	Lavender
<i>Linum</i>	Flax
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Cardinal Flower
<i>Lychnis coronaria</i>	Rose Campion
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i>	Miscanthus Grass
<i>Monarda</i> spp.	Bee Balm
<i>Nepeta</i> spp.	Catmint
<i>Origanum</i> spp.	Ornamental Oregano
<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i>	Russian Sage
<i>Salvia</i> spp.	Sage
<i>Stachys</i> spp.	Lamb's Ear
<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	Foamflower
<i>Thymus</i> spp.	Thyme

Trees and Shrubs:

<i>Berberis</i> spp.	Barberry
<i>Buxus</i> spp.	Boxwood
<i>Cephalotaxus</i> spp.	Plum Yew
<i>Cornus</i> spp.	Dogwood
<i>Cotoneaster</i> spp.	Cotoneaster
<i>Hydrangea</i> spp.	Hydrangea
<i>Ilex</i> spp.	Holly
<i>Juniperus</i> spp.	Juniper
<i>Leucothoe</i> spp.	Leucothoe
<i>Magnolia</i> spp.	Magnolia
<i>Picea</i> spp.	Spruce
<i>Pieris japonica</i>	Andromeda
<i>Sarcococca</i> spp.	Sweetbox
<i>Spiraea</i> spp.	Spirea
<i>Thuja x 'Green Giant'</i>	Green Giant Arborvitae
<i>Viburnum</i> spp.	Viburnum
<i>Vitex</i> spp.	Chastetree
<i>Weigela florida</i>	Weigela

Repellants

Using a combination of repellants is most effective. Spray-on repellants--such as Liquid Fence, Deer-Off, and Deer-Away--are best if used in rotation to avoid familiarity. Human hair or bars of soap also make nice complimentary repellants. If odor or taste is not enough, a barrier may be needed. Fences are quite labor intensive, though normally effective. Trunk protectors will allow trees to establish without deer damage.

Sources

This sheet has been compiled from experience, recommendations from our suppliers, and information from the West Virginia Extension