

Deer Resistant Native Plants to Grow This Season

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The following plant characteristics will help deter deer.

1. Aromatic – Plants with very aromatic leaves and stems: herbs, mints, strong or pungent scents.
2. Prickly – Prickly leaves and stems are very effective at deterring browsing deer.
3. Leathery – Plants with tough, thick, or leathery leaves.
4. Hairy – Leaves that have stiff hairs are not favored by deer.



Bee Balm attracts pollinators, hummingbirds and deters deer, preferring full sun and well-draining soil. The dense flowerheads feature clusters of bright red, tubular blossoms that last throughout the summer months. The leaves have a minty fragrance which helps protect this plant from browsing deer and rabbits.



Butterfly weed is an easy-to-grow perennial with vibrant orange flowers that attract butterflies. Butterfly weed, also called butterfly milkweed, is a beautiful perennial wildflower that is easy to grow in the home garden. It's the perfect plant for creating a butterfly garden.



Cinnamon fern is a large clump-forming fern with unique golden-brown fronds. Ferns are an excellent addition to any shade garden. In early spring, unusual-looking upright, golden-brown, spore-bearing fronds emerge, adding some colorful visual appeal. Ferns are not bothered by browsing deer or rabbits.



Columbine is deer-resistant and thrives in full sun or partial shade. The native columbine is red with a yellow center. It is a beautiful late-spring wildflower, very showy, uniquely shaped, and favored by early-season hummingbirds. Deer may nibble on young columbine plants, but once the plants get a little larger, they are generally left alone and will bloom freely.



Coral honeysuckle is a native climbing vine with red trumpet-shaped flowers that attract hummingbirds. (Not to be confused with the native trumpet creeper or the invasive Japanese honeysuckle) It grows best in full sun but is quite tolerant of partial shade. This climbing vine that should be grown with a sturdy support.



Green and gold is a low-growing perennial with bright yellow flowers that bloom from spring to fall. This little plant makes an excellent ground cover for small areas but isn't generally aggressive enough to colonize large areas. It grows best in a shade garden, out of direct sunlight. Green and gold has a long bloom time.



Little bluestem is a native ornamental grass that thrives in full sun and tolerates drought. It is bluish-green throughout the growing season. In late summer, reddish flowers bloom on taller stems. By fall, seedheads turn white and fluffy, and plants turn reddish-bronze and look quite striking as part of the fall landscape.



Maidenhair fern is a hardy and beautiful fern that spreads slowly, prefers shade, and is tolerant of dry soil. It is hardy and easy to grow. This fern will naturalize and slowly spread by underground rhizomes to form colonies. Maidenhair fern grows best in the shade with medium-moisture well-drained soil. This plant is not bothered by deer or rabbits.



Narrowleaf mountain mint is a native plant that prefers full sun and well-drained soil. It grows best in full sun but will tolerate some light partial shade. Like many mints, it can grow aggressively. Control unwanted spread by growing mint in a container or thin dense clusters. Clusters of tiny white flowers bloom throughout the summer, attracting numerous pollinators.



New England aster is a hardy plant that grows vigorously and attracts pollinators with its abundant purple flowers. This plant is hardy and easy to grow in the home landscape. They bloom in profusion each fall and provide late-season color until the first frost.



Prickly pear is a native cactus that thrives in full sun and poor soil. In the home garden, grow prickly pear cactus in dry, gritty soil with excellent drainage. Beautiful, large, showy yellow flowers bloom from late spring into mid-summer, followed by bright red, showy fruits.



Purple coneflower is a native, hardy plant that attracts pollinators with its beautiful, long-lasting flowers. It is hardy and easy to grow. The large, showy, pinkish-purple flowers bloom throughout summer and attract many butterflies and bees. As the plants mature, they develop stiff hairs, deterring further deer nibbling.



Rose mallow hibiscus is a large, shrub-like perennial that produces beautiful, showy flowers from mid to late summer. This plant can grow quite large and bushy and does especially well in areas with medium to wet soil. This plant is not tolerant of drought and should be watered during extended dry periods. It is, however, tolerant of deer and rabbits.



Threadleaf coreopsis is a dainty-looking plant with very thin feathery leaves. It blooms freely during the summer months with showy, bright yellow flowers. It attracts butterflies and other pollinators. It is versatile and tolerates drought, poor soil, and browsing mammals. Along a sunny border, enjoy its beauty all season.



Winterberry holly is a native plant that thrives in moist soil and attracts birds with red berries in winter. Grow it in full sun or partial shade. It makes a good hedge or border in a moist location. After winterberry loses its leaves for the winter, the colorful berries persist, attracting birds and adding interest to the winter landscape.



Witch hazel is a colorful shrub with yellow flowers and attractive seed capsules. It adds late-season color to the home landscape. In autumn, the leaves turn from green to yellow as days get cooler. From mid to late fall, as the leaves turn brown and fall off, long-petaled thin yellowish flowers bloom along the woody stems of this plant. After leaf fall, the entire plant seems to be lined with yellow, followed by small greenish-brownish seed capsules, which add continued interest into the winter months. Witch hazel attracts birds, but it is unpalatable to browsing deer.