

Deer Resistant Plants

Deer can be devastating visitors to the garden, defoliating the landscape like a swarm of locusts. Prized trees and shrubs can be ruined overnight and some plants such as pine, spruce, arborvitae and juniper often do not recover. Mature trees can be transformed into lollipops with all of the bottom branches defoliated leaving foliage only on the top half of the tree. Deer feeding on plants is also referred to as “browsing”. This browsing is most evident on evergreens and can be especially damaging during the winter when plants are dormant. Although deer can potentially browse any plant, there are certain plants that tend to be less appealing to them under normal conditions. However, in harsh winters where much of the landscape is under ice and snow and food is scarce, deer may forage on any plant material they can find. While there are various deer repellents and elaborate fences on the market to protect your garden, here are a few deer resistant woody plants that are less likely to be devoured by deer. Please refer to the key to determine the level of attractiveness deer have to a particular plant species.

Key

- A-Rarely Attractive
- B-Seldom Attractive
- C-Occasionally Attractive

Plant	Level of Attractiveness
<i>Abies concolor</i> (White Fir)	C
<i>Acer griseum</i> (Paperbark Maple)	C
<i>Acer rubrum</i> (Red Maple)	C
<i>Aesculus parviflora</i> (Bottlebrush Buckeye)	A
<i>Aucuba japonica</i> ‘Variegata’ (Gold Dust Plant)	B
<i>Berberis julianae</i> (Wintergreen Barberry)	A

<i>Betula nigra</i> (River Birch)	A	
<i>Betula papyrifera</i> (Paper Birch)	A	
<i>Buddleia davidii</i> (Butterfly Bush)	A	
<i>Buxus spp.</i> (Boxwood)	A	
<i>Calocedrus decurrens</i> (California Incense Cedar)	A	A
<i>Carpinus betulus</i> (European Hornbeam)	A	
<i>Cedrus atlantica</i> (Atlas Cedar)	A	
<i>Cephalotaxus harringtonia</i> (Plum Yew)	B	
<i>Chamaecyparis obtusa</i> (Falsecypress)	A	
<i>Cornus kousa</i> (Kousa Dogwood)	B	
<i>Cornus sericea</i> (Redosier Dogwood)	B	
<i>Crataegus spp.</i> (Hawthorne)	B	
<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> (Japanese Cryptomeria)	B	B
<i>Enkianthus campanulatus</i> (Redvein Enkianthus)	B	B
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> (European Beech)	B	
<i>Forsythia x intermedia</i> (Border Forsythia)	B	
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> (English Holly)	B	
<i>Ilex glabra</i> (Inkberry Holly)	B	
<i>Ilex opaca</i> (American Holly)	B	
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i> (Eastern Red Cedar)	C	
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i> (Mountain Laurel)	B	
<i>Kerria japonica</i> (Japanese Kerria)	A	
<i>Leucothoe fontanesiana</i> (Drooping Leucothoe)	B	B
<i>Mahonia bealei</i> (Leatherleaf Mahonia)	B	
<i>Nandina domestica</i> (Heavenly Bamboo)	B	
<i>Picea abies</i> (Norway Spruce)	B	
<i>Pieris japonica</i> (Japanese Pieris)	A	
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i> (American Sycamore)	A	
<i>Salix matsudana</i> (Hankow Willow)	B	
<i>Skimmia japonica</i> (Japanese Skimmia)	B	
<i>Stewartia pseudocamellia</i> (Japanese Stewartia)	B	
<i>Thuja plicata</i> (Western Arborvitae)	C	
<i>Vitex agnus -castus</i> (Chastetree)	A	
<i>Microbiota decussata</i> (Russian Arborvitae)	A	
<i>Osmanthus heterophyllus</i> (Holly Osmanthus)	B	B
<i>Viburnum carlesii</i> (Koreanspicebush)	B	
<i>Viburnum plicatum var. tomentosum</i> (Doublefile Viburnum)		

B

Viburnum sieboldii (Siebold Viburnum) B

Viburnum rhytidophyllum (Leatherleaf Viburnum)

B