

DEER RESISTANT PLANTS

Deer can be devastating visitors to the garden, defoliating the landscape like a swarm of locusts. Your prized specimen 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 referred to as “browsing.” This browsing is most evident on evergreens and can be especially damaging during 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, understand that “deer resistant” plants are a relative term, and *very few plants are truly safe if deer really get hungry*. There are many differing opinions among gardeners about what plants are truly deer resistant, with few people agreeing on a concise list. The severity of deer browsing depends on many factors such as weather, scarcity of food, what other food sources are available nearby, and the size of the deer population in a given area. 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, there are some reliable deer resistant plants that are less likely to be devoured by deer. Often published lists of deer resistant plants are categorized by terms such as rarely damaged or occasionally damaged, to reflect the relative resistance plants will have to deer browsing. There are several excellent lists from Dr. Mark Bridgen of Cornell University (<http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/factsheets/deerdef/>) and Rutgers University Agricultural Experiment Station (<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/deerresistance/>). Below is a quick reference to some of the plants I have observed as reliably resistant to deer.

Annuals: Cleome, Lantana, Marigold (*Tagetes* spp.), Snapdragon
Perennials: Butterfly Weed (*Asclepias* spp.), Coreopsis, Nepeta, Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.)
Groundcovers: Epimedium, Hellebore (*Helleborus* spp.), Pachysandra, Skimmia
Bulbs: Allium, Daffodil (*Narcissus* spp.), Snowdrops (*Galanthus* spp.), Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*)
Shrubs: Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*), Pieris, Japanese Plum (*Cephalotaxus harringtonia*) Yew (*Taxus* spp.), Tree Peony (*Paeonia suffruticosa*)
Trees: American Holly (*Ilex opaca*), Bottlebrush Buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*), River Birch (*Betula nigra*), Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.)

*Many ornamental grasses and ferns are also deer resistant.

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SEASHORE PLANTS

Plants that are adapted to grow near or at the seashore must have certain qualities such as salt tolerance; the ability to withstand drying wind, heat, and drought; and the ability to withstand dry, sandy soils. These often-harsh conditions will severely damage or kill the average plant but the seashore is also home to a wide range of native species. In a home garden setting where you desire a more cultivated, less naturalistic look, there *are* non-invasive, exotic species that will also tolerate seashore conditions. While this environment creates some challenges not experienced inland, maritime landscapes can be just as rewarding and beautiful.

In addition to the typical growing conditions associated with seashore conditions, coastal areas of New York and New Jersey have been ravaged by natural disasters over the last few years. Hurricanes Irene and Sandy wreaked havoc on natural environments and residential areas along the Jersey shore, southern New York in New York City, and on Long Island. Wind damage, fresh and salt water flooding, and erosion have caused serious damage to landscapes, which have had to be totally rebuilt in some cases. But landscape professionals, researchers, and homeowners have learned a lot about what plants withstood these severe conditions and how to better protect these landscapes now. This list of plants below offers some herbaceous and woody plants that are recommended for seashore conditions. Please note that there are different levels of exposure, with fewer species thriving closer to the harshest conditions and more species thriving with some protection from wind, salt spray, and flooding. These recommended plants function as specimen plantings, mass plantings, on slopes, or as foundation plantings.

Annuals: Cleome, Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea* spp.), Lantana, Petunia, Marigold (*Tagetes* spp.), Salvia, Verbena

Perennials: Aster, Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* spp.), Coreopsis, Daylilies (*Hemerocallis* spp.), Iris, Nepeta, Ornamental Grasses, Sedum

Groundcovers and Vines: Trumpet Vine (*Campsis* spp.), Cotoneaster, Barrenwort (*Epimedium* spp.), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.), Junipers (*Juniperus* spp.), Russian Arborvitae (*Microbiota decussata*)

Shrubs: Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*), Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*), Clethra, Winterberry and Inkberry Holly (*Ilex* spp.), Japanese Plum Yew (*Cephalotaxus harringtonia*), Landscape Roses (*Rosa* spp.)

Trees: Crabapple (*Malus* spp.), Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* spp.), American Elm (*Ulmus americana*), Heritage Birch (*Betula nigra*), Ornamental Cherry (*Prunus* spp.), Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.)