

Deer Resistant Plant List

One of the most common challenges of gardening in the Rogue Valley is the plentiful deer population. Selecting deer resistant plants is often hit-and-miss and, to compound the problem, not all deer have the same tastes. What is deer resistant in Jacksonville may not be deer resistant in Eagle Point or Ashland. Shooting Star has gained expertise working with customers throughout the region as well as designing landscapes that incorporate deer resistant plants.

First, remember that **deer resistant** does not mean **deer proof!** Deer may develop a taste for any new plant depending on the season, when it was planted, how much water it gets, and a host of other factors. In addition, young deer will basically eat anything they encounter as they learn about what is edible and what isn't. You can also expect increased deer pressure during drought years or after a wildfire, when deer are desperate for something to eat.

Shooting Star Nursery also recommends putting a wire cage around all new trees. Whether your trees are deer resistant or not, deer may nibble on the new or lower growth, or scrape their antlers on the trunk causing damage that can be irreversible. It's especially important to cage your trees in late summer to prevent this type of damage.

If you do find deer nibbling the tender growth of your newly planted flowers or shrubs, be patient and observe their behavior. They may simply try it and then leave it alone. Alternatively, be prepared to protect all new plantings in heavy deer country, even if you are using very deer-resistant plants. You can also spray all new plantings – or more sensitive plants – with deer repellent spray and alternate between several different spray types.

Our deer resistant list continues to be a work in progress, so let us know what has and hasn't worked for you and we will incorporate into our list!

[Ferns](#) | [Grasses and Grass-like Plants](#) | [Perennials](#) | [Shrubs](#) | [Trees](#) | [Vines](#)

| Botanical Name | Common Name | Comments |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| ***very deer resistant, **usually deer resistant, *can be deer resistant but depends on deer population, try one first | | |
| FERNS - Deer will avoid most ferns | | |
| Adiantum pedatum | Maidenhair/Five Finger Fern | ** native, very delicate texture but wirey stems |
| Athyrium niponicum 'Pictum' | Japanese Painted Fern | ** silvery/purple foliage, delicate texture |
| Blechnum spicant | Deer Fern | ** native |
| Cyrtomium fortunei | Hardy Holly Fern | *** glossy, holly like fronds |
| Dryopteris erythrosora | Autumn Fern | *** coppery new growth |
| Matteuccia | Ostrich Fern | ** |
| Polystichum munitum | Western Sword Fern | *** native, evergreen |
| Polystichum polyblepharum | Tassel Fern | *** native |
| Polystichum setiferum | Alaskan Fern | *** native |
| Woodwardia fimbriata | Giant Chain Fern | *** coastal native, largest hardy fern |
| GRASSES AND GRASS-LIKE PLANTS - Deer will avoid most ornamental grasses | | |
| Agave neomexicana | Hardy Agave | *** impenetrable |
| Hardy Bamboo species (ie. Fargesia, Phyllostachys, Sasa) | Bamboo species | ** occasional chewing when newly planted |
| Bouteloua g. 'Blonde Ambition' | Blue Grama Grass | *** persistent flag-like seedheads |
| Calamagrostis spp. | Feather Reed Grass | *** |
| Carex spp. | Sedges | *** |
| Dasyilirion wheeleri | Desert Spoon | *** Wonderfully prickly! |

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|---|---|---|
| Deschampsia sp. | Tufted Hair Grass | *** |
| Festuca spp. | Fescue | * small evergreen clumps, can be grazed during sparse months |
| Hakonechloa macra | Japanese Forest Grass | *** good for moist shade |
| Helictotrichon sempervirens | Blue Oat Grass | *** evergreen, tough |
| Hesperaloe parviflora | Red False Yucca | ** may eat flowers, but foliage is tough/spikey |
| Juncus spp. | Rush | *** many native, wet sites |
| Miscanthus sinensis | Maiden Grass | *** |
| Muhlenbergia capillaris, rigens | Pink Muhly Grass, Deer Grass | *** great for meadow look |
| Panicum virgatum | Switch grass | *** nice fall color |
| Pennisetum spp. | Fountain Grass | *** |
| Phormium spp. | New Zealand Flax | *** place in protected location |
| Schizachyrium scoparium | Little Bluestem | *** fall color, prairie native |
| Sesleria autumnalis | Autumn Moor Grass | ** evergreen, meadowy look |
| Stipa gigantea | Giant Feather Grass | *** evergreen, showy bloom |
| Yucca filamentosa | Adam's Needle (Yucca) | *** showy flower spikes |
| PERENNIALS - Strongly scented, highly textured (sharp or fuzzy), or poisonous choices are best | | |
| Acanthus spinosus | Bear's Breeches | * dramatic, spined 3' tall flower spikes, part shade |
| Achillea millefolium and cultivars | Yarrow | ** many colors available |
| Aconitum spp. | Monkshood | *** poisonous |
| Agastache spp. | Anise Hyssop, Licorice or Hummingbird Mint | *** fragrant foliage, hummingbird magnets, long bloom |
| Allium spp. | Garlic and onion relatives, ball shaped flowers | ** strong smell |
| Ajuga reptans | Carpet Bugle | ** vigorous shade groundcover |
| Amsonia spp. | Bluestar | *** prairie native, latex sap in stems, amazing gold fall color |
| Anemone spp. | Anemone/Windflower | * poisonous, but will eat flowers in bad areas |
| Armeria maritima | Sea thrift | * may eat flowers |
| Artemisia spp. | Wormwood | *** aromatic foliage |
| Asarum caudatum | Wild Ginger | ** foliage is aromatic when crushed, native for dry shade |
| Asclepias spp. | Milkweed | *** milky sap in stems, attracts butterflies/bees |
| Aster oblongifolius | Aromatic Aster | *** |
| Bergenia spp. | Heartleaf Bergenia/Pigsqueak | *** large glossy foliage, spring blooms |
| Brunnera macrophylla | Siberian Bugloss | *** stiff hairs cover large leaves, shade, many silvery forms |
| Campanula spp. | Bellflower | ** once naturalized, groundcover and hairy species are best |
| Centranthus ruber | Jupiter's Beard | *** |
| Ceratostigma plumbaginoides | Dwarf (Hardy) Plumbago | ** late summer bloom + fall color |
| Coreopsis spp. | Tickseed | ** C. verticillata needle-like leaf is best, long bloom |
| Crocsmia spp. | Crocsmia/Montbreita | * may eat flowers |

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|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Delosperma spp. + new hybrids | Hardy Ice Plant | ** tighter foliage is more reliable |
| Dianthus spp. | Carnations or Pinks | *** aromatic foliage, drought tolerant groundcovers |
| Dicentra spp. | Bleeding Heart | ** poisonous, but sometimes eaten |
| Digitalis spp. | Foxglove | ** poisonous, but eaten sometimes |
| Echinacea spp. | Coneflower | * may eat flowers/petals |
| Echinops spp. | Globe Thistle | *** spiny leaves/flowers |
| Epimedium spp. | Bishop's Hat | * good for dry shade |
| Erigeron glaucus | Seaside Daisy | ** |
| Erigeron karvinskianus | Fleabane/Santa Barbara Daisy | *** long blooming groundcover, drought tolerant |
| Eriophyllum lanatum | Oregon Sunshine | ** depends on the local deer population |
| Erodium spp. | Heronbill | * long blooming, ground hugging, rock garden perennials |
| Eryngium spp. | Sea Holly | *** spiny flowers and sometimes leaves too |
| Erysimum 'Bowl's Mauve' | Purple Wallflower | *** long blooming but short lived |
| Euphorbia spp. | Spurge | *** toxic sap in stems, mostly evergreen species |
| Gaillardia | Blanket Flower | ** - may eat flowers |
| Gaura lindheimeri | Gaura | ** may eat in bad areas |
| Geranium cantabrigiense | Geranium/Cranesbill | *** scented leaves, great groundcover even in dry shade |
| Glaucium flavum | Horned Poppy | *** fabulous silver foliage, horn shaped seed pods, droughty |
| Glumicalyx goseloides | Nodding Chocolate Flower | *** orange flowers smell like...., evergreen in mild winters |
| Helleborus spp. | Lenten Rose | *** poisonous, winter bloom, part-full shade |
| Hemerocallis | Daylily | * may eat flowers |
| Hypericum calycinum | St. John's Wort | *** aggressive groundcover, erosion control |
| Iris spp. | Iris | *** Lots of native species |
| Kniphofia spp. | Red hot poker | ** occasionally flowers are eaten |
| Lamium maculatum | Dead nettle | ** silvery variegated foliage illuminates shady areas |
| Leucanthemum x superbum | Shasta Daisy | ** may eat foliage after bloom finishes |
| Limonium sp. | Sea Statice | ** may eat flowers & nibble foliage in heavy deer areas |
| Marrubium rotundifolium | Silverheels Horehound | *** |
| Monarda spp. | Bee Balm | ** fragrant foliage |
| Monardella odoratissima | Coyote Mint | *** native, long summer bloom |
| Muhlenbeckia complexa | Wire Vine | *** |
| Narcissus | Daffodils | *** one of the only reliable bulbs |
| Nepeta spp. | Catmint | *** aromatic foliage, long bloom, great selection |
| Oenothera spp. | Evening Primrose, Sundrops | ** may eat when new, very drought tolerant |
| Opuntia sp. | Prickly Pear Cactus | *** |
| Origanum spp. | Oregano - edible and ornamental | *** fragrant foliage, many cool flowering forms |

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|--|--|---|
| Pachysandra | Pachysandra | ** great for dry shade |
| Paeonia | Peony - countless cultivars | ** classic, showy blooms, handsome foliage |
| Papaver orientale | Oriental Poppy | ** fuzzy foliage, may eat |
| Penstemon heterophyllus 'Margarita BOP' | Foothill Beardtongue | ** usually deer resistant, better when established |
| Penstemon pinifolius | Pineleaf Beardtongue | ** adaptable rock garden plant, needle-like leaves |
| Perovskia atriplicifolia | Russian Blue Sage | *** aromatic foliage |
| Phlomis spp. | Jerusalem Sage | *** large, fuzzy leaves |
| Phlox subulata | Creeping Phlox | *** needle like foliage |
| Pratia peduncularis | Blue Star Creeper | *** tight groundcover |
| Pterocephalus depressus | Moroccan Pincushion | *** |
| Pulmonaria spp. | Lungwort | ** leaves are covered in prickly hairs, early bloom |
| Rubus calycinoides(pentalobus) | Creeping Bramble | *** tough leaves, prickly stems |
| Rudbeckia spp. | Black Eyed Susan | * may eat flowers |
| Salvia spp. + hardy hybrids | Sage | *** smellier foliage is best |
| Santolina chamaecyparissus, virens | Lavender Cotton | *** aromatic, evergreen foliage, button-like flower |
| Schizostylus coccinea | Crimson River Lily | ** best in mild areas |
| Sempervivum spp. | Hens and Chicks, Houseleek | ** less browsed upon than sedums |
| Senecio grayi | Bush Senecio | *** |
| Sisyrinchium sp. | Blue-eyed/Yellow-eyed Grass | ** |
| Solidago 'Fireworks' | 'Fireworks' Goldenrod | ** may browse |
| Stachys spp. | Lambs Ears | *** fuzzy foliage |
| Teucrium spp. | Germander | *** aromatic, evergreen foliage, bee attractors |
| Thymus spp. | Thyme - creeping and upright | *** aromatic foliage and edible |
| Verbena rigida | Rigid Verbena | ** will munch in bad areas |
| Veronica spp. | Speedwell | * groundcover species are best, need protection while young |
| Vinca minor | Common Periwinkle | *** aggressive groundcover, part-shade erosion control |
| Zauschneria sp. | California Fuschia | ** may eat, best fall bloom, colonizer |
| SHRUBS - Aromatic, resinous/sticky, thorny/prickly or poisonous choices are the most reliable | | |
| Arctostaphylos spp. | Manzanita - esp. 'Austin Griffiths' , 'Pacific Mist' | ** better once established, new growth often chewed, need protection when young |
| Aucuba japonica | Spotted Laurel | *** |
| Baccharis pilularis | Coyote Bush | *** native into CA, super tough |
| Berberis spp. | Barberry - deciduous & evergreen species | *** thorny stems, colorful in spring and fall |
| Buddleia hybrids (sterile) | Butterfly Bush | ** when mature, * when young |
| Buxus spp. | Boxwood | *** classic for low hedges and formal gardens |
| Callistemon spp. | Hardy Bottlebrush - alpine species | *** needle-like pokey foliage |
| Calluna vulgaris | Scotch Heather | * may eat when new, late summer bloom |
| Calycanthus spp. | Spicebush | ** protect when small |

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| Carpenteria 'Elizabeth' | Bush Anemone | ** |
| Caryopteris x clandonensis | Bluebeard, Blue Mist Spirea | *** great choice! reliable, long summer bloom, attracts pollinators |
| Ceanothus spp. | California Lilac, Blue Blossom | ** cultivars with holly-like leaves are most reliable (like 'Blue Jeans' and 'Emily Brown'), needs protection when young |
| Cephalotaxus harringtonia | Japanese Plum Yew | ** pokey needle-like foliage, still testing |
| Chaenomeles speciosa | Flowering Quince | ** thorny types only, early spring blooms |
| Choisya ternata | Mexican Orange | *** fragrant white blooms, evergreen |
| Choisya x dewitteana 'Aztec Pearl', 'Bluestone' | Mexican Orange (cutleaf) | *** similar to above, but more compact, heat/sun/drought tolerant & hardier; needs good drainage & summer heat |
| Cistus spp. | Rockrose | * the more resinous/sticky varieties are best (like 'Blanche', 'Sunset') better once established |
| Cotinus spp. | Smoke bush | * may eat when new or any low down growth, protect until large and established |
| Cotoneaster spp. | Prostrate Bearberry | ** the smaller leaved/tightly prostrate forms seem best |
| Daphne spp. | Daphne | *** poisonous, fragrant blooms, likes good drainage |
| Distylium | Distylium | ** protect when young |
| Elaeagnus spp. | Silverberry | ** evergreen, vigorous growth, good hedge, thorny varieties e.g.: Hosobu Fukurin) are best |
| Erica spp. | Mediterranean Heath varieties | ** most common are winter blooming |
| Euonymus alatus 'Compactus' | Compact Burning Bush | * better once established |
| Fatsia japonica | Japanese Aralia | ** |
| Feijoa sellowiana | Pineapple Guava | ** may chew tips when new |
| Forsythia x intermedia | Forsythia hybrids | ** older, established plants, protect when young |
| Genista spp. | Yellow Broom (groundcovers) | *** gold blooms in spring |
| Hebe cupressoides, salicornioides etc. (e.g.: Karo, Golden Esk) | Whipcord Hebe | *** cypress-like fragrant foliage |
| Hibiscus syriacus | Rose of Sharon | * may eat when new or any low down growth, better when established |
| Holodiscus discolor | Oceanspray | ** |
| Hypericum 'Sunburst' | 'Sunburst' St. John's Wort Bush | ** once established |
| Ilex spp. | Holly | ** the spinier, leathery leaves are more reliable |
| Juniperus spp. | Juniper | *** |
| Kalmia latifolia | Mountain Laurel | ** poisonous, may still eat, rich/acidic soil |
| Lavandula spp. | Lavender | *** fragrant foliage |
| Leptospermum humifusum, lanigerum, namadgiensis | Alpine Tea Tree | *** aromatic foliage |
| Leucothoe (esp. 'Scarletta', 'Rainbow') | Leucothoe | ** |
| Loropetalum chinensis | Fringe flower | * only in mild deer areas or protected spots |
| Mahonia spp. | Oregon Grape | *** native, leathery/holly-like leaves |

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| <i>Myrica californica</i> | Pacific Wax Myrtle | ** coastal native, fragrant foliage, large shrub/small tree, protect when young |
| <i>Myrtus communis</i> 'Compacta' & 'Tarrentina' | Common Myrtle | *** fragrant foliage, starry white flowers, put in hot/protected sites (zone 8) |
| <i>Nandina domestica</i> | Heavenly Bamboo | * only in mild deer areas or larger, established plants |
| <i>Nerium oleander</i> | Oleander | *** highly poisonous, extremely drought tolerant, put in a protected site (zone 8) |
| <i>Osmanthus heterophyllus</i> | Holly-Leaf Osmanthus | ** many cultivars, ones with spinier leaves are more reliable |
| <i>Ozothamnus</i> spp. | Ozothamnus | *** evergreen, interesting foliage and flowers |
| <i>Philadelphus</i> spp. | Mock Orange | * larger/established plants only |
| <i>Picea</i> spp. (dwarf varieties) | Spruce (shrubby cultivars) | *** pokey needles |
| <i>Pieris</i> | Andromeda or Lily of the Valley Shrub | *** poisonous, many cultivars |
| <i>Pinus mugo pumilo</i> | Dwarf Mugo Pine | *** |
| <i>Pittosporum</i> | Pittosporum | ** |
| <i>Podocarpus</i> | Yew Pine | *** |
| <i>Potentilla</i> spp. | Cinquefoil | ** species with tiny or hairy leaves are the most reliable, best in mild areas |
| <i>Prunus lusitanica</i> | Portuguese Laurel | ** good hedge plant, the most reliable Laurel species |
| <i>Punica</i> | Pomegranate | ** protect when young |
| <i>Pyracantha</i> | Firethorn | ** thorny and tough |
| <i>Rhamnus californica</i> 'Eve Case' | Eve Case California Coffeeberry | ** more compact than the species - seems to be browsed less as well, evergreen, showy berries, great for wildlife |
| <i>Rhododendron</i> spp. | Rhododendron - scented varieties like 'PJM' are best | ** mildly poisonous, but may still eat |
| <i>Rhus aromatica</i> 'Gro-Low' | 'Gro-Low' Fragrant Sumac | ** better when established |
| <i>Ribes</i> spp. | Flowering Currant (native, pink) | * will eat especially when small, thorny species like <i>R. roezlii</i> are more reliable |
| <i>Rosa rugosa</i> (and native rose species) | Rugosa Rose, Sea Tomato | * very thorny, showy hips, may still eat - use only in mild areas |
| <i>Rosmarinus officianalis</i> | Rosemary | *** fragrant foliage |
| <i>Sarcococca</i> spp. | Sweetbox | *** leathery foliage, fragrant winter blooms, will tolerate deep shade |
| <i>Spirea</i> spp. | Spirea | ** best in mild areas, often with nice foliage color, protect when young |
| <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> | Snow Berry | * native, thicket forming, better when established |
| <i>Teucrium fruticans</i> | Bush Germander | *** aromatic foliage |
| <i>Umbellularia californica</i> | California Bay | *** aromatic, leathery foliage, slow growing - can eventually attain tree size |
| <i>Viburnum bodnantense</i> 'Pink Dawn' | Pink Dawn Viburnum | ***most reliable species, aromatic foliage, good choice for a large shrub |
| <i>Vitex agnus-castus</i> | Chaste Tree | *** aromatic foliage, purple flowers in summer |

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|---|------------------------------|--|
| TREES - It's always important to use a wire cage or trunk protector around any new tree (to guard the bark from bucks rutting their antlers in fall and to prevent lower limbs/leaves from being chewed). Aside from the following trees, almost any deciduous tree would also be considered deer resistant once large enough and with a high enough canopy. | | |
| <i>Abies pinsapo</i> 'Glauca' | Blue Spanish Fir | *** short, pokey needles |
| <i>Abies concolor</i> | White Fir | *** thick, flat needles |
| <i>Acer palmatum</i> | Green Japanese Maple | ** protect lower branches and trunk when young |
| <i>Albizia julibrissin</i> | Mimosa, Silk Tree | * small leaves, will eat lower branches |
| <i>Araucaria</i> | Monkey Puzzle | *** sharply pointed leaves |
| <i>Cedrus</i> spp. | Cedar | *** pokey needles, usually the most reliable conifer |
| <i>Cercis</i> spp. | Redbud | *j <i>C. occidentalis</i> and <i>C. reniformis</i> are more reliable |
| <i>Chamaerops humilis</i> | Mediterranean Fan Palm | *** barbed branches, fibrous leaves |
| <i>Chitalpa tashkentensis</i> | Chitalpa | ** long summer bloom, very drought tolerant |
| <i>Chilopsis linearis</i> | Desert Willow | *** aromatic, narrow leaves, long/showy summer bloom |
| <i>Crataegus</i> spp. | Hawthorne | *** species w/large thorns are best |
| <i>Ginkgo biloba</i> | Maidenhair Tree | ** leathery leaves |
| <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> | Honey Locust | ** small leaves |
| <i>Heptacodium miconioides</i> | Seven Sons Flower | ** good results in mild areas, late summer bloom, peeling bark |
| <i>Ficus</i> varieties | Fig tree | ** aromatic leaves, may still eat lower growth |
| <i>Juniperus</i> varieties | Juniper | *** |
| <i>Lagerstroemia</i> spp. | Crape Myrtle | ** will eat when new/low growth, best as tree form or limbed up |
| <i>Laurus nobilis</i> | Bay Laurel | ** aromatic foliage used in cooking, evergreen, |
| <i>Magnolia</i> spp. | Magnolia | *** evergreen species are more reliable |
| <i>Parrotia</i> | Persian Ironwood | ** great fall color |
| <i>Picea</i> spp. | Spruce | *** the pokier the needles the better (like Colorado Blue Spruce) |
| <i>Pinus</i> spp. | Pine | *** |
| <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> | Douglas Fir | *** |
| <i>Quercus</i> spp. | Oak | * species w/pokier, barbed leaves are more reliable, may eat lower growth when young |
| <i>Sequoiadendron</i> spp. | Giant Sequoia, Coast Redwood | *** |
| <i>Thuja</i> 'Green Giant' | 'Green Giant' Arborvitae | ** protect when young |
| <i>Trachycarpus fortunei</i> | Windmill Fan Palm | *** |
| <i>Zelkova</i> | Zelkova | ** good street tree, great fall color |
| VINES - Protect all vines when young! | | |
| <i>Akebia quinata</i> | Akebia vine | *** reliable in mild areas |
| <i>Bignonia capreolata</i> | Cross Vine | * |
| <i>Campsis radicans</i> | Trumpet Vine | * |
| <i>Clematis armandii</i> | Evergreen Clematis | * leathery leaves |
| <i>Holboelia coriacea</i> | China Blue Vine | * leathery leaves |

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|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Humulus lupulus</i> | Hops | *** stiff hairs coat leaves and stems |
| <i>Lonicera</i> spp. | Honeysuckle | ** usually reliable |
| <i>Parthenocissus</i> spp. | Virginia Creeper, Boston Ivy, Silver Vein Creeper | * |
| <i>Trachelospermum asiaticum</i> | Asiatic Jasmine | *** used as evergreen groundcover |
| <i>Trachelospermum jasminoides</i> | Star Jasmine | ** protect when young |
| <i>Wisteria</i> spp. | Wisteria | * will eat, but grows fast enough to overcome |