

At a Glance: 25 Plants That Deer Won't Touch

While there are many plants out there that claim to be 'deer resistant', there are a few standbys that are pretty much guaranteed to make the deer in your neighborhood scrunch their noses up in disgust and walk right over to your neighbor's! When gardening with deer, it is easy to get discouraged and think of all the beautiful plants that you can't grow. However, there are also many great plants that they won't touch, and with a bit of planning and imagination you too can have a beautiful deer proof yard. As a basic guideline, deer are repelled by prickles, odd textures and strong scents. And as a bonus, many deer proof plants are also drought tolerant and good for pollinators. This list is not exhaustive, but here are 25 of our favorite deer proof plants that are easy to find at local garden centres.

Common Name	Latin Name	Features	Link to Photo
Barberry	<i>Berberis</i>	Shrub of various sizes, often prickly. Beautiful fall colour.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/357469/berberis-thunbergii-orange-sunrise-pbr-(v)/details
Western Bleeding Heart	<i>Dicentra formosa</i>	Native early flowering perennial. Good for pollinators. Readily spreads and naturalizes in shady areas.	http://pnwplants.wsu.edu/PlantDisplay.aspx?PlantID=42
Siberian Bugloss	<i>Brunnera</i>	Spring flowering perennial for dappled shade.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/274495/brunnera-macrophylla-emerald-mist-pbr-(v)/details
Peonies	<i>Paeonia</i>	Many varieties. Drought tolerant perennial. Excellent for cut flowers.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/116692/paeonia-suffruticosa-hakuo-jisi-(s-d)/details
Dahlias	<i>Dahlia</i>	Many varieties. Perennial. Excellent for cut flowers.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/227179/dahlia-glorie-van-noordwijk-(s-c)/details
Globe Thistle	<i>Echinops</i>	Sun loving, drought tolerant perennial. Loved by pollinators.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/114273/echinops-bannaticus/details

New Zealand Satin Flower	<i>Libertia grandiflora</i>	Evergreen sun loving perennial. Drought tolerant.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/10068/libertia-grandiflora-(r-br)-sweet/details
Royal Grevillea, Spider Flower	<i>Grevillea victoriae</i> , <i>Grevillea</i> 'Canberra Gem'	Beautiful drought tolerant, sun loving evergreen shrubs with flowers the hummingbirds adore.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/10163/grevillea-victoriae/details https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/90133/grevillea-canberra-gem/details
Ferns – Sword, Deer.	<i>Polystichum munitum</i> <i>Blechnum spicant</i>	Evergreen, shade loving, low maintenance.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/13486/polystichum-munitum/details https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/2320/blechnum-spicant/details
Herbs – Oregano, Rosemary, Thyme	<i>Origanum vulgare</i> <i>Rosmarinus Officinalis</i> <i>Thymus vulgaris</i> <i>Salvia Officinalis</i>	Perennial drought tolerant herbs that love sun and are great to have on hand for cooking, but are also loved by pollinators.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/81791/origanum-vulgare-compactum/details https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/181199/rosmarinus-officinalis-haifa/details https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/18213/thymus-vulgaris/details https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/45291/salvia-officinalis-robin-hill/details

Woodland Sage, Hot Lips	<i>Salvia nemorosa</i> , <i>Salvia microphylla</i> 'hot lips'	Sun loving drought tolerant perennials loved by pollinators and hummingbirds.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/361032/salvia-nemorosa-blue-bouquetta-(-alkif-)/details https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/208839/salvia-hot-lips/details
Lithodora	<i>Lithodora</i>	Drought tolerant evergreen perennial ground cover.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/97326/lithodora-diffusa-grace-ward/details
Lenten Rose	<i>Helleborus</i>	Drought tolerant, shade tolerant early flowering perennial.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/358839/helleborus-hybridus-sp-lily-(-h1r-210-)-(spring-promise-series)-(d)/details
Catmint	<i>Nepeta</i>	Drought tolerant, sun loving perennial loved by pollinators.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/350023/nepeta-faassenii-purrsian-blue-pbr/details
Sea Holly	<i>Eryngium</i>	Drought tolerant perennial. Good as cut/dried flowers.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/60349/eryngium-planum-seven-seas/details
Autumn Crocus	<i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	Drought tolerant fall flowering perennial.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/4190/colchicum-autumnale/details
Poppies	<i>Papaver</i>	Huge variety of self seeding annuals. Loved by pollinators.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/93873/papaver-commutatum-ladybird/details
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis</i>	Freely self-seeding, drought tolerant perennial. Loved by both pollinators and hummingbirds.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/505514/digitalis-panther/details
Yellow Bush Daisy	<i>Euryops</i>	Perennial bush. Long flowering.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/7107/euryops-pectinatus/details

Fleabane	<i>Erigeron</i>	Drought tolerant, long blooming perennial. Good for rock gardens.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/32487/erigeron-karvinskianus/details
Lung Wort	<i>Pulmonaria</i>	Shade tolerant spring flowering perennial.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/151053/pulmonaria-dark-vader/details
Snow in Summer	<i>Cerastium tomentosum</i>	Drought tolerant ground cover. Good for rock gardens.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/3401/cerastium-tomentosum/details
Woolly Sunflower	<i>Eriophyllum</i>	Native, drought tolerant perennial.	
Spurge	<i>Euphorbia</i>	Large variety of low maintenance, early flowering perennials.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/109472/euphorbia-amygdaloides-craigieburn/details
Lavender	<i>Lavandula</i>	Sun loving, drought tolerant perennial shrub. Low maintenance. Loved by pollinators.	https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/92551/erica-cinerea-prostrate-lavender/details

References:

Deer Resistant Design, by Karen Chapman. Timber Press Inc., 2019.

University of Washington PNW Plant Database: <http://pnwplants.wsu.edu/Default.aspx>

BBC GardenersWorld.com: <https://www.gardenersworld.com/search/plants/>

Pacific Horticulture: <https://www.pacifichorticulture.org>

University of Wisconsin – Madison, Division of Extension - Wisconsin Horticulture: <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu>

Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder: <https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx>