

DEER RESISTANT PLANTS

Recommended for Coastal Southeast Landscapes



Hungry deer can devastate landscape plants in just a matter of a few nights. While it is true that some plants like azaleas and blueberries are preferred food sources for white-tailed deer, there are many attractive landscape selections that are less palatable and less frequently damaged by deer.

KEY TO LIST

One of the easiest ways to reduce deer damage in your yard is to landscape with plants deer prefer not to eat. This fact sheet is intended to serve as a guide for choosing landscape plants resistant to deer feeding in North Carolina. Since a starving deer will eat anything to stay alive, no plant is guaranteed!

Tips on Deer and Plants

No plant is deer proof! When hungry, deer will eat anything to survive. During stressful times such as drought, plants that are usually avoided may be damaged.

Deer will eat almost anything in spring, as tender new growth emerges from plants. Deer prefer vegetation that is soft to the touch and high in water content. They especially relish **flower buds**.

Over fertilized and **over watered** plants are particularly lush and appealing to deer.

The **plants deer prefer not to eat** have common characteristics:

- Thorny or prickly leaves or stems
- Strong scents and pungent tastes, such as herbs
- Poisonous parts
- Thick, latex-like sap
- Hairy leaves

Using a combination of a variety of methods to deter deer will give the most dependable results. To find out more about additional strategies to minimize deer damage in your landscape, visit the online publications listed at the end of this fact sheet.

The rest of this file contains information on how much deer typically damage specific varieties of

Trees, Shrubs, Palms, Ornamental Grasses, Groundcovers, Ferns, Vines, Perennials, Bulbs and Annuals that grow in Coastal Southeastern North Carolina.

LANDSCAPE TREES

Deer injure trees in two ways: By eating foliage and twigs, and by rubbing against the bark with their antlers, which is especially damaging to young trees or those with thin bark. Wire cylinders and other protective devices are available to protect the trunks of young trees from this type of damage.

The shape and mature size of a tree will greatly determine its susceptibility to grazing damage. Damage is most common on trees that are young and still small enough to reach, those that are low branched, and those that do not grow very large.

In deer-prone landscapes, trees that grow tall and hold their branches high are the best choice, though they may need to be protected until they are tall enough to be out of a deer's reach. Trees can be protected individually with wire cages, or planted in area of the landscape that is fenced off.



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KEY

*Plants Native to the Southeastern U.S.
BOLD plants are particularly deer resistant

Trees

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Evergreen (E)/Deciduous (D) | Exposure |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Japanese maple | <i>Acer palmatum</i> | D | Pt. shade-shade |
| Red maple | <i>Acer rubrum</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| Red Buckeye* | <i>Aesculus pavia</i> | D | Pt. shade |
| River birch* | <i>Betula nigra</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| Deodar cedar | <i>Cedrus deodora</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Redbud* | <i>Cercis canadensis</i> | D | Pt. shade-sun |
| Chinese fringe tree | <i>Chionanthus retusus</i> | D | Pt. shade-sun |
| Fringe tree* | <i>Chionanthus virginicus</i> | D | Pt. shade-sun |
| Dogwood | <i>Cornus florida</i> | D | Pt. shade-sun |
| Hawthorn* | <i>Crataegus species</i> | D | Sun |
| Japanese cedar | <i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Ginkgo | <i>Ginkgo biloba</i> | D | Sun |
| Honey Locust* | <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> | D | Sun |
| Witch hazel | <i>Hamamelis sp.</i> | D | Pt. shade |
| Foster's holly* Savannah holly* East Palatka holly* | <i>Ilex x attenuata</i> hybrids | E | Sun |
| Nellie Stevens' holly | <i>Ilex x 'Nellie Stevens'</i> | E | Sun |
| American holly* | <i>Ilex opaca</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Eastern red cedar* | <i>Juniperus virginiana</i> | E | Sun |
| Golden rain tree | <i>Koelreuteria paniculate</i> | D | Sun |
| Crape myrtle | <i>Lagerstroemia</i> hybrids | D | Sun |
| Southern magnolia* | <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> | E | Sun |
| Sweetbay magnolia* | <i>Magnolia virginica</i> | E | Pt. shade |
| Saucer magnolia | <i>Magnolia soulangiana</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| Crabapple | <i>Malus sp.</i> | D | Sun |
| Dawn redwood | <i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i> | E | Sun |
| Longleaf pine* | <i>Pinus palustris</i> | E | Sun |
| Loblolly pine* | <i>Pinus taeda</i> | E | Sun |
| Japanese black pine | <i>Pinus thunbergii</i> | E | Sun |
| Carolina cherry laurel* | <i>Prunus caroliniana</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Cherries and plums | <i>Prunus sp.</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| Basket oak | <i>Quercus michauxii</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| Willow oak* | <i>Quercus phellos</i> | D | Sun |
| Live oak* | <i>Quercus virginiana</i> | E | Sun |
| Weeping willow | <i>Salix babylonica</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| Bald cypress* | <i>Taxodium distichum</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| Chaste tree | <i>Vitex agnus-castus</i> | D | Sun |

Shrubs

| Common Name | Scientific name | Evergreen (E)/Deciduous (D) | Exposure |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Glossy abelia | <i>Abelia x grandiflora</i> | Semi-evergreen | Sun |
| Pineapple guava | <i>Acca sellowiana</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Fetterbush/Florida leucothoe | <i>Agarista populifolia</i> | E | Pt. shade-sun |
| Wintergreen barberry | <i>Berberis julianae</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Japanese boxwood | <i>Buxus microphylla</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Bottlebrush | <i>Callistemon rigidus</i> | E | Sun |
| Sweetshrub | <i>Calycanthus floridus</i> | D | Pt. shade-shade |
| Blue mist shrub | <i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i> | D | Sun |
| Plum yew | <i>Cephalotaxus harringtonia</i> | E | Pt. shade-shade |
| Forsythia/Yellowbells | <i>Forsythia x intermedia</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| Dwarf Fothergilla | <i>Fothergilla gardenii</i> | D | Pt. shade |
| Gardenia | <i>Gardenia jasminoides</i> | E | Pt. shade |
| Inkberry holly* | <i>Ilex glabra</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Dwarf yaupon* | <i>Ilex vomitoria</i> | E | Sun |
| Anise shrub* | <i>Illicium parviflorum</i> | E | Pt. shade |
| Chinese juniper | <i>Juniperus chinensis</i> | E | Sun |
| Lorapetalum | <i>Loraoetalum chinense</i> | E | Sun |
| Wax myrtle | <i>Myrica cerifera</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Oleander | <i>Nerium oleander</i> | E | Sun-pt shade |
| Tea olive | <i>Osmanthus fragrans</i> <i>O. herterophylla</i> | E | Sun |
| Southern Yew | <i>Podocarpus macrophyllus</i> | E | Sun-pt. shade |
| Arrowood/Viburnum | <i>Viburnum sp.</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |

Ornamental Grasses

| Common Name | Scientific name | Evergreen (E)/Deciduous (D) | Exposure |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Feather reed grass | <i>Calamagrostis brachytricha</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| River oats* | <i>Chasmanthum latifolium</i> | D | Sun-shade |
| Maiden grass | <i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |
| Muhly grass* | <i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> | D | Sun |
| Blue sand switchgrass* | <i>Panicum amarum</i> | D | Sun |
| Panic grass* | <i>Panicum virgatum</i> | D | Sun |
| Fountain grass | <i>Pennesetum alopecuroides</i> | D | Sun-pt. shade |

Perennials (including ferns)

| Common Name | Scientific name | Exposure |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Yarrow | <i>Achillea</i> sp. | Sun-pt. shade |
| Anise hyssop* | <i>Agastache foeniculum</i> | Sun-pt. shade |
| Bugleweed | <i>Ajuga reptans</i> | |
| Texas bluestar | <i>Amsonia hubrichtii</i> | Sun-pt. shade |
| Columbine | <i>Aquilegia</i> sp. | Pt. shade-shade |
| Butterfly weed* | <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> | Sun |
| Common milkweed* | <i>Asclepias syriaca</i> | Sun-pt. shade |
| Swamp milkweed* | <i>Asclepias incarnata</i> | Sun-pt. shade |
| Cast iron plant | <i>Aspidistra elatior</i> | Shade |
| Lady fern* | <i>Athyrium filix-femina</i> | Shade |
| Japanese painted fern | <i>Athyrium nipponicum</i> | Shade |
| False indigo | <i>Baptisia</i> sp. | Sun |
| Green and Gold* | <i>Chrysogonum virginianum</i> | Pt. shade-shade |
| Holly fern | <i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i> | Shade |
| Tickseed* | <i>Coreopsis</i> sp. | Sun |
| Dianthus | <i>Dianthus</i> sp. | Sun-pt. shade |
| Purple coneflower* | <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> | Sun |
| Joe pye weed* | <i>Eutrochium</i> sp. | Sun-pt. shade |
| Guara* | <i>Guara lindheimeri</i> | Sun-pt. shade |
| Lenten rose | <i>Helleborus x hybridus</i> | Shade |
| Lantana | <i>Lantana</i> sp. | Sun |
| Bee balm* | <i>Monarda</i> sp. | Sun-pt. shade |
| Cinnamon fern* | <i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i> | Shade |
| Royal fern* | <i>Osmunda regalis</i> | Shade |
| Russian sage | <i>Perovskia</i> hybrids | Sun |
| Christmas fern* | <i>Polystichum aristochroides</i> | Shade |
| Rosemary | <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> | Sun |
| Texas sage* | <i>Salvis greggii</i> | Sun |
| Anise sage | <i>Salvia guarantica</i> | Sun |
| Goldenrod | <i>Solidago</i> sp. | Sun-pt. shade |
| Lamb's ear | <i>Stachys byzantine</i> | Sun-pt. shade |
| Prickly pear* | <i>Opuntia</i> sp. | Sun |

Bulbs

| Common Name | Scientific name | Exposure |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Agapanthus | <i>Agapanthus</i> sp. | Sun |
| Ornamental onion | <i>Allium aflatunense</i> | Sun |
| Hardy cyclamen | <i>Cyclamen hederifolium</i> | Sun-pt. shade |
| Crinum lilly | <i>Crinum</i> sp. | Sun |
| Crocoshmia | <i>Crocoshmia</i> sp. | Sun |
| Summer snowflake | <i>Leucojum aestivum</i> | Sun-pt. shade |
| Daffodils | <i>Narcissus</i> sp. | Sun-pt. shade |

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Brunswick Botanical Garden & Information Hotline

To see plants that grow in Coastal Southeast NC, visit the **Brunswick Botanical Garden** behind the Brunswick County Cooperative Extension (BCCES) Offices. It is free and open daylight hours, 7 days a week. The garden and associated programs are managed by CES horticultural staff in conjunction with trained Extension Master Gardener Volunteers.

For questions about plant selection and maintenance, lawn care, vegetable gardening, plant disease and pest problems, visit or call the BCCES **Information Hotline**. Staffed by trained Extension Master Gardener Volunteers under the supervision of Extension Horticulture staff, the Hotline is open from 9:00 a.m. until noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. when offices are open.

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Learn More with these Online Resources

NC Cooperative Extension Plant Database
plants.ces.ncsu.edu/

NC Cooperative Extension Gardening Portal
for all your garden, lawn and landscape needs:
gardening.ces.ncsu.edu/

VISIT US IN BRUNSWICK COUNTY!

**Brunswick County Cooperative Extension
& Botanical Garden**

Brunswick County Government Complex

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brunswick.ces.ncsu.edu

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

