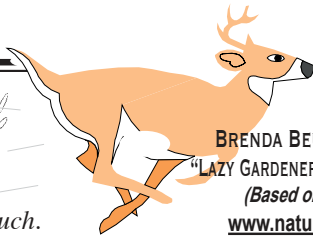




Deer don't seem to like daffodils much.



SOME THOUGHTS ON DEER & GARDENING FROM
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"LAZY GARDENER AND FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER"
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So you want to stop deer from eating your landscape . . .

Frankly I'd give anything to be able to look out my window and see deer. But it's true you can have too much of any good thing. Here's some advice I've collected over the years . . .

- Deer have incredible stomachs. They eat plants toxic to other animals. The biggest problem is — once a deer has fed in a particular spot, he will return to that spot and start eating, even it is filled with a plant he isn't supposed to like. So even if you switch to no-deer plants, you may still have to barrier the place for a while. And they have this uncanny knack for only coming to dinner when you're gone or asleep.
- A 6 foot fence may deter a well fed deer, but it will take an 8-10 foot fence to stop a hungry deer. Deer in different areas eat different things; so not every plant on every list will work in every yard. Also: what works this year may not work next year. A lot depends on the weather and availability of native forage — or if the man down the street who spent a fortune on deer food has moved.
- **Just remember** . . . deer love tender young leaves, even on bulbs, perennials and shrubs they will ignore once they become larger. Azaleas and emerging tulips are good examples. This is why deer so often go after newly-set-



Saplings and trees usually suffer the most during the fall/winter "rutting" season. Bucks rub velvet from their antlers and do chauvinistic male things that may cause damage (similar to their human counterparts who get overly excited at football games). Protect the trees if this bothers you. It's just nature at work.

Deer have a strong sense of smell - particularly for new, young green growth. Try sprinkling these odoriferous items below around the plants or on leaves ... or pack into bags and hang from branches:

- Scented shaved soap
- Rotting eggs
- Bloodmeal
- Human hair
- Creosote
- Curry powder
- Coyote urine (available in some nurseries. How do you suppose they collect it?)



Or, mix 1 1/2 dozen eggs in 5 gal. of water. Spray on plants.

out plants. Some say if you will put a wire mesh cage over a new young shrub or tree, the deer may still get to the tender leaves (and will be less likely to tear down the cage if he can). But the plant itself won't be destroyed and once it becomes well established, and the leaves get tougher, deer might be more likely to leave it alone.

- Strips of metal hanging from poles are said to scare deer away. I suspect our deer would see these as welcoming flags. On the other hand, deer are very skittish. How about one of those noise makers that are triggered by someone walking by? Or a string across their path into the yard or onto the porch that would trigger a radio to come on when pulled. Some recommend feeding deer in another part of the yard. This might work with limited populations. But often there are more deer than you can afford to feed.

The only person I ever heard say emphatically her deer solution worked perfectly was a wonderful 80± year-old woman who every night made her husband go "mark" the borders of her vegetable garden (a la coyotes). She said she never had a deer problem although all her neighbors did.

Deer seem to especially love. . .

Asian jasmine • Chrysanthemums • Crepe myrtles • Daylilies • Geraniums
Hibiscus • Impatiens • Indian hawthorne • Phlox • Red tip photinas
Roses • Spirea (bridal wreath) • Wisteria

Have you checked out your neighbors' yards? What is surviving in their yards may be your best source for ideas on what to plant.

Would love to hear about plants your deer do/don't eat & where you live!
Brenda Beust Smith, Houston's "Lazy Gardener" — lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com



On the other side are plants said to be distasteful to deer
Experiment first! Don't buy dozens of one plant. Try a wide variety of selections. Plant them in clumps surrounded by a decorative mulch. You can always buy more of the ones you like, the ones that like you (!) and the deer don't like.



Plants said to be unappetizing to deer

from Brenda Beust Smith, the Lazy Gardener

(See other side for cautions and tips.)



This first group is a sampling of no-deer plants recommended in "Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife," a publication of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept. To obtain a copy, call the Urban Program's Wildscapes Project, 281-456-7029 (email: urbansfw@aol.com).

These are wonderful natives and well-adapted plants that should be in our landscapes anyway. If you live south of the Woodlands, put these in high raised

Annual Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*)
 Ashe Juniper (*Juniperus ashei*)
 Beargrass (*Nolina* spp.)
 Black eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
 Blackfoot daisy (*Melampodium leucanthum*)
 Butterflywood (*Asclepias*)
 Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)
 Cenizo (*Leucophyllum frutescens*)
 Cherry laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*)
 Clematis vine (*Clematis* spp.)
 Columbine (*Aquilegia* spp.)
 Crossvine (*Bigonia capreolata*)
 Deciduous Holly (*Ilex decidua*)
 Ferns (almost all)
 Flame-leaf sumac (*Rhus lanceolata*)
 Fleabane (*Erigeron* spp.)
 Four O'Clocks (*Mirabilis* spp.)

At Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens just north of Houston, where deer are a constant problem, they interplant daylilies, which deer dearly love, with daffodils and other narcissus, which deer seem to really dislike.



Gayfeathers (*Liatris* spp.)
 Indian Blanket (*Gaillardia puchella*)
 Lantana (*Lantana horrida*)
 Larkspur (*Delphinium carolinianum*)
 Lemon Mint (*Mentha citriodora*)
 Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum capillus*)
 Maximilian Sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliani*)
 Mealy sage (*Salvia farinacea*)

Mexican hat (*Ratibida columnifera*)
 Penstemons (*Penstemon* spp.)
 Pink Evening Primrose (*Oenothera speciosa*)
 Pink wood sorrel (*Oxalis drummondii*)
 Prickly Pear cactus (*Opuntia lindheimeri*)
 Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
 Red yucca (*Hesperaloe parviflora*)
 Scullcap (*Scutellaria drummondii*)
 Texas mountain laurel (*Sophora secundiflora*)
 Texas sage (*Salvia texana*)
 Verbenas (*Verbena* spp.)
 Wedelia (*Zexmenia; Wedelia hispida*)
 Yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*)

Even though these are listed as plants deer don't eat, deer may still be tempted by new young leaves, especially if you put these in a spot where deer have fed before. Don't give up, but be prepared to protect new plantlets.



Additional plants deer are said not to favor:

Agarito, blackfoot daisy, Carolina jessamine, coralbean, daisy bush, flame acanthus, Mexican buckeye, Mexican mint marigold, oleander, pampas grass, possumhaw holly, pyracantha, rosemary rusty blackhaw, Texas barberry, Texas palmetto, Texas persimmon, Texas pistachio, Texoma stans (yellow bells), thyme, vitex and wax myrtle. A random sampling of herb gardeners seems to indicate deer MAY like English lavender, rosemary, sage, sweet basil or sage.

Even more Deer-Proof Garden recommendations:

Ageratum, cleome, coreopsis, cosmos, dusty miller, globe amaranth, peppers (ornamental), English ivy, foxglove, Iceland poppy, iris, myrtle, ornamental grasses, peppermint, periwinkle, spearmint, tulips and zinnias. (Leave plants in their nursery pots for a week or so. If they don't get eaten, plant them in the garden! At least that saves you precious energy.)

Check with your County Extension Agent and the many members of the Master Gardener programs sponsored by your County Extension Service. (Blue Pages of your phone book.)

Deer Off®, Tree Guard®, Deer Away®, Hinder®, Ropel® and other repellents seem to work well. Bone tar oil has been successfully used around mature plants, but don't use it around seedlings. Your nurseryman may have other suggestions. Some folks have had success with electric fences. But just the thought of these makes me squeamish, so you'll have to ask elsewhere for this advice



St. Fiacre is Patron Saint of Gardeners if you're ready to pray for divine intervention. St. Frances of Assisi probably won't be too sympathetic. He believed wildlife should be free to go wherever it wants, whenever it wants. That's why the bird is perched on his shoulder, to show it's free to fly away.

Email me at lazygardenerbrenda@gmail.com



John Ferguson is, in my mind, our area's (and beyond's) leading horticulturist. When he invited me to work on a Houston Garden Newsletter after I left the Chronicle, I thought I'd died and gone to Heaven.



I hope you'll give me a chance to show you why by subscribing to our free, weekly, emailed newsletter!

John, a nationally-recognized soil, mulch & organics expert, and I do weekly columns.

As often as possible, leading horticulturists from across the nation contribute their expertise.



In addition, we have — without exception — the MOST extensive calendar of Greater Houston Area horticultural & ecology-oriented events that I have seen in the 45+ years I've processed such calendars for the Chronicle and beyond.

Boggles my mind every week.

I love publicizing local organization's events!

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