Deer and Rabbit-Resistant Plants

Most of us find out the hard way that hungry deer and rabbits will eat almost any vegetation within their reach. However, you can make your garden a little less inviting by including plants they dislike and forgoing those they prefer. In general, deer and rabbits avoid plants with a sticky, rough or fuzzy texture, and plants with spiny protection like cacti and American holly. They also turn up their noses at plants with fragrant leaves.

Below is a list of some deer and rabbit-resistant plants. Native species are marked with an asterisk (*), and plant groups containing native species are marked with a cross (+). Some of these plants are invasive and therefore should be kept out of gardens bordering natural areas. See TRCA’s Naturescaping fact sheet and Invasive Plant List for more information on native and non-native species.

**Perennials**
- anemone*
- beebalm*
- black-eyed Susan*
- blanket flower
- blazingstar*
- bleeding heart
- butterflyweed*
- catmint
- chive
- chrysanthemum
- columbine*
- coreopsis*
- daffodil
- delphinium
- foxglove*
- golden Alexander*
- hellebore
- hollyhock
- Icelandic poppy
- lady’s mantle
- lamb’s ear
- lavender
- lavender hyssop*
- lemon thyme
- little bluestem*
- monkshood
- nodding wild onion
- Ohio goldenrod*
- peony
- prairie dropseed*
- rosemary
- salvia
- stiff goldenrod*
- spearmint
- tansy
- tiger lily
- wild quinine*
- yarrow

**Annuals**
- alyssum
- calendula
- cleome
- cornflower
- cosmos
- dahlia
- dianthus
- geranium
- grape hyacinth
- impatiens
- lobelia
- marigold
- morning glory
- nicotiana
- salvia
- snapdragon
- sweet pea
- zinnia
Shrubs
alder* hawthorn* roses*
American holly honeysuckle smoke bush
common boxwood juniper* snowberry*
cotoneaster lilac spirea*
flowering dogwood nannyberry* spirea
forsythia potentilla gracilis*

Trees
ash* eastern hemlock* redbud*
birch* honey locust spruce*
hackberry* larch*
hazel* oak*

Deer and Rabbit Delicacies
Although hungry deer and rabbits eat almost any vegetation within reach, some plants – including the ones listed below – are definite favourites. Avoid these plants or use them as lures to protect more treasured plants.

apple daylily phlox
azalea English ivy rhododendron
cedar iris sedum
cardinal flower hemlock spindle tree
cherry hollyhock sunflower
coneflower hosta tulip
cranesbill geranium impatiens wood hyacinth
crocus meadow rue yew
chrysanthemum pansy

Additional Information
Careful plant selection is an excellent way to reduce deer and rabbit problems in your garden. If however, these and other critters are still causing an unacceptable amount of damage in your garden, visit the Web sites listed below for advice on non-toxic repellents, physical barriers and more.

Canadian Wildlife Federation – Wild about Gardening

Critter Repellent.com