

Outsmarting Our “Deer” Friends

Are you bothered by deer damaging your landscape? Then “stick” with deer-resistant shrubs and trees so your selections don’t become “sticks.” Many trees and shrubs flourish in Ocean County despite deer in the neighborhood. Make some of those plants your choice for your yard.

Is it possible to guarantee 100% protection from deer’s nibbling? No, but you can choose plants that are very low on the taste-bud selections of deer.

No plant is totally deer-proof, but some will at least be the last choice of deer. You also want to avoid planting those plants that deer find most tasty and delicious! See Rutgers Fact Sheet #271 for a list of plants rated by deer resistance.

Deer are in your neighborhood and you love a certain tree or shrub? And the deer love it, too? Then plant it, but be sure to fence in your yard against those voracious eaters.

Remember, we have taken much of their territory, removed many of the native plants they love and planted landscape trees and shrubs in their place. The deer tried them, found some they relished and some they will eat only as a last resort. So, once you know their choices, you can make informed decisions to keep the deer out of your yard.

A few attractive deer-resistant trees that will embellish your landscape include river and paper birch, American holly, red pine, Japanese black pine, pitch pine, dwarf Alberta spruce, and bottlebrush buckeye. Good shrub choices include heather, heath, bayberry, andromeda, and arrowwood viburnum. These choices all thrive in Ocean County.

What should you avoid because deer love them? Stay away from apple, arborvitae, Atlantic white cedar, cherry, redbud, rhododendrons, hybrid roses, yew and European mountain ash.

Although nothing is totally guaranteed, if you landscape with deer-resistant choices, there is a good chance that those white-tails will leave your yard and search for tasty menus elsewhere. They will search for plants that are on the frequently damaged list...and all you’ll see of them will be their pretty white tails!

See Rutgers Fact Sheet # 271 at <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs>

Checklist for December

Flower and Vegetable Garden

- ✓ Check your bulbs, tubers and corms in storage. If they are sprouting, store in a colder spot. If they are shriveling, rewrap in paper bags with damp peat moss.

Indoor Plants

- ✓ Set houseplants on trays with moistened pebbles to add humidity.
- ✓ Give your Christmas cactus and poinsettia a sunny spot for best leaf development.

Garden

- ✓ Inspect your gardening tools; clean and sharpen now.
- ✓ Recycle your cut Christmas tree according to your town’s guidelines or use the evergreen boughs as winter protection for perennials. **New Jersey: Where and How to Recycle Your Christmas Tree After the Holidays**
<https://www.pickyourownchristmastree.org/New%20JerseyChristmasTreeRecyclingDisposal.php>
- ✓ Draw a map of the garden area and review your garden layout.
- ✓ Look around for tools you do not have and hint for these as holiday gifts.