



WSU EXTENSION
Cowlitz County



Deer Resistant Plants

For Blacktail Deer in the Pacific Northwest



Why deer are coming into our yards

Native tree that was knocked down during the April snow storm. Every limb that the deer can reach have been stripped of foliage. The deer also have eaten every seeding of this tree that sprouted. There is no replacement. This is happening because there are too many deer in our area for the forest around to support. So our landscaping becomes their new feeding ground.



Photo by Michele Thomas



Photo by Michele Thomas

The need for deer resistant plants in your landscape

Here are pictures of two different types of dogwood trees one is a new planting and the other an older planting. Deer have eaten both.



Photo by Michele Thomas

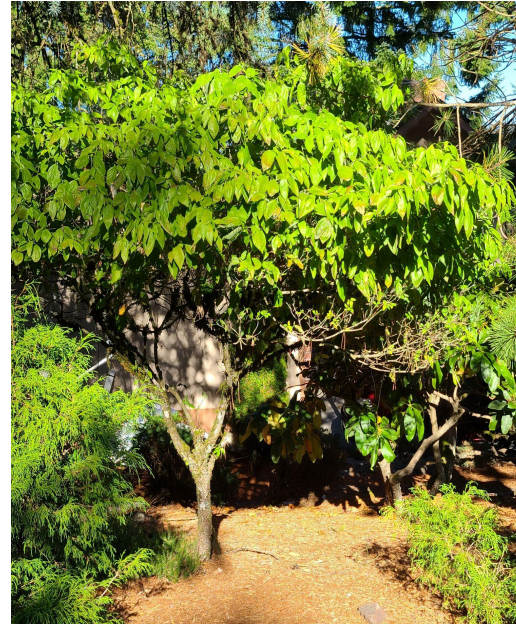


Photo by Michele Thomas

Shrubs in the landscape that deer have acquired a taste for:

California Lilac - Ceanothus



Photo by Michele Thomas

Thuja - Arborvitae



Photo by Michele Thomas

Couple of food plants that deer also have added to their diet.

Grapes

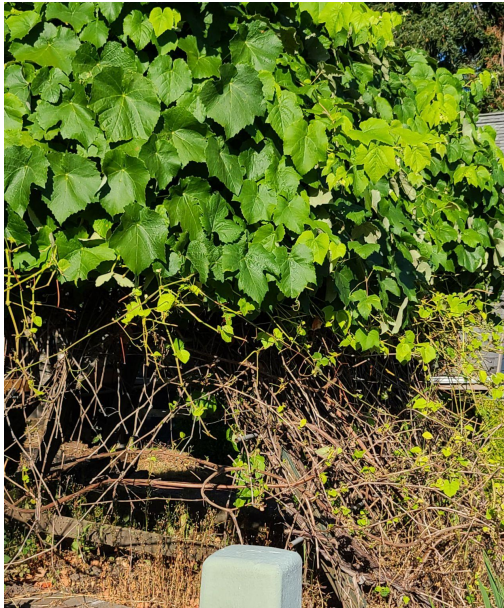


Photo by Michele Thomas

Strawberries



Photo by Michele Thomas

Also you are seeing lawn grasses being added in mid to late summer.

Lawn Grasses (Green grass is under daisies)



Photo by Michele Thomas

Last year's lawn, this year almost all dead



Photo by Michele Thomas

Learning about the Blacktail Deer

- The Blacktail deer of the Pacific Northwest is the Columbian Blacktail.
- It is a species that evolved from the California Whitetail Deer around 2 million years ago due to glaciers isolating them. During the years in isolation, they developed a pogo-stick style jump that enables them to escape predators over rocky mountainous terrain that the glaciers left; those skill genes are still passed onto their offspring today.
- They are also related to the mule deer, as the mule deer is a cross between a whitetail and a blacktail deer that occurred about 10,000 years ago.

Individual Traits

- The buck is always larger than the doe.
- Deer have no upper incisors so they press their lower incisors against the hard rough pad at the roof of their mouth and rip vegetation from stems.
- Deer depend on their sense of smell for many things: finding food, unseen predators, marking territories through glands between their hoofs, and locating one another. A deer can smell freshly plowed soil a quarter of a mile away.
- The does are territorial when they are with their fawns.
- They have keen hearing and can move each ear independently. Even in deep sleep, they monitor sounds for danger.

Individual Traits continued

- Deer can see and detect movement from a good distance. But deer can only see a few colors; violet, blue, green, and yellow. Orange and red look gray to them, one of the reasons hunters wear orange.
- Deer are ruminants and have four stomachs; their first is the rumen, which has to be full before they will retire and chew their cud. Depending on size, a deer can eat from 8 to 18 pounds of plant material per feeding. That can be up to 2 gallons of plant material.
- Deer eat plant material during the spring, summer, and fall. In the winter, they move into the older-growth forest and live on lichens and mosses.

Individual Traits continued

- More on food: In the spring and early summer, deer eat sprouting and young tender plants. As summer progresses, many of the plants' chemistry changes as growth matures, affecting the scent, taste, and nutritional value as well as toxicity of the plants. This is why what they eat changes with the seasons.
- Fawns learn to eat by nibbling on what their mother is eating, even when they are nursing. This implants lasting memories of appearance, taste, and aftereffects that help them make choices as they get older. So if they are in our gardens, they learn to eat our garden plants along with the natives plants that are available following their mom.

Development of the plant list

List of things that I worked with to develop my list.

- Deer sense of smell. If you mess with their sense of smell, deer have trouble locating food and can not smell predators as easily.
- Deer sense of taste. They do not like many plants with milky sap.
- Deer Stomach. Deer will learn over time to avoid plants that make them sick to their stomachs

Plants that are Deer Resistant

Trees (almost all young trees need to be protected when they are first planted)

1. Birch
2. Cypress (all varieties)
3. Firs (need to be protected when young)
4. Hemlock
5. Magnolia
6. Pine
7. Redwood
8. Spruce



Hemlock Seeding Photo by Michele Thomas

Plants that are Deer Resistant

Shrubs

1. Abelia
2. Barberries - all varieties and hybrids
3. Butterfly bushes - all varieties and hybrids
4. Boxwoods - all varieties
5. Flowering Quince
6. Forsythia
7. Lilacs
8. Mugo pines- all hybrids
9. Rhododendrons - all varieties
10. Strawberry tree - dwarf
11. Sweet box -Sarcococca
12. Viburnums - all varieties and hybrids

Dwarf Strawberry Tree



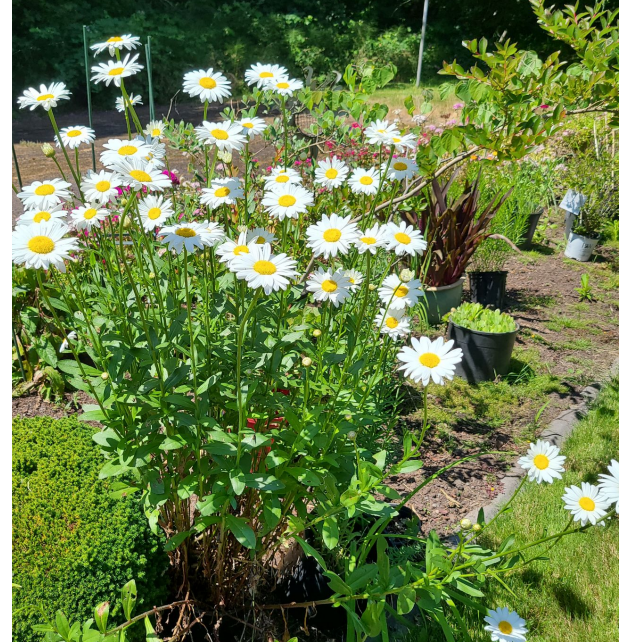
<https://www.monrovia.com/dwarf-strawberry-tree.html>

image by Doreen Wynja

Plants that are Deer Resistant

Perennials

1. Agastaches - all varieties and hybrids
2. Amsonia - all varieties and hybrids
3. Daisies - all varieties and hybrids
4. Dahlias
5. Euphorbia - all varieties and hybrids
6. Foxgloves
7. Lavender - all varieties
8. Ornamental grasses
9. Poppies
10. Penstemon - all varieties and hybrids
11. Red Hot Poker
12. Sages - all varieties
13. Sword Ferns - only fern I found deer do not eat the new growth of
14. Most herbs - perennials and annuals



Victorian Daisies Photo by Michele Thomas

Plants that are Deer Resistant

Bulbs, and Tubers

1. Alliums
2. Belladonna lilies- Naked Ladies
3. Crocosmia
4. Crocus - all varieties
5. Daffodils - all varieties
6. Dahlias
7. Irises - all varieties
8. Peonies
9. Pineapple lillies



Pineapple Lillies - Photo by Michele Thomas

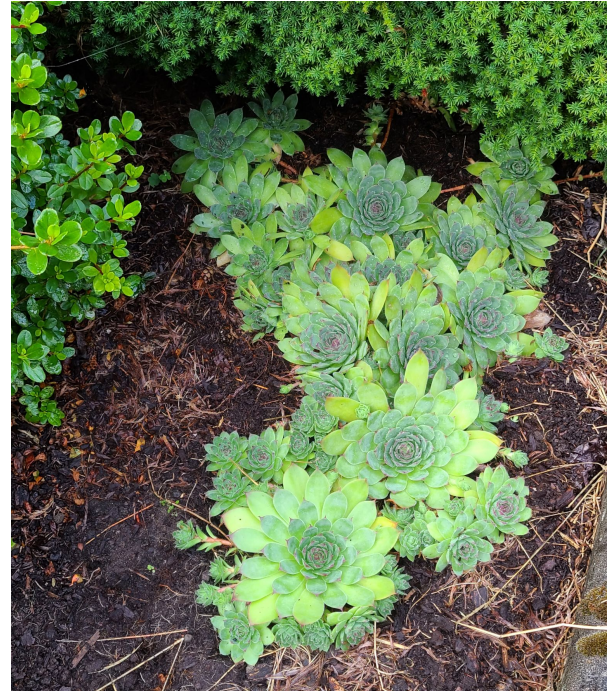
Plants that are Deer Resistant

Annuals

1. Alyssum
2. Nicotiana - Flowering tobacco

Groundcovers

1. Ajuga - all varieties
2. Sempervivum - Hen and Chicks - all varieties



Hen and Chicks Photo by Michele Thomas

References

Deer-Resistant Landscaping - Proven Advice and Strategies for Outwitting Deer and 20 Other Pesky Mammals, Neil Soderstrom 2009 Part 1 - Outwitting Deer Pages 1 through 48

The New Sunset Western Garden Book - The Ultimate Gardening Guide - 2013 - Deer Resistant Plants pages 53-59

Portland Nursery Handout on Deer Resistant Ornamentals.