Deer Resistant Vegetables and Herbs

If you want to minimize deer damage in an open garden, it’s best to start with plants that deer don’t like. Deer will “browse” on most anything when wild food sources are low. Some garden edibles, however, are less attractive to these voracious eaters than other plants.

Certain plants, such as rhubarb, are toxic to deer. Deer usually also avoid root vegetables (which require digging) and prickly vegetables such as cucumbers and squashes with hairy leaves. Cultivars with strong odors such as onions, garlic and fennel are not palatable to deer.

Please regard the following list of deer-resistant garden plants as a general guide. Hungry deer are unpredictable and at times may eat even the most “deer-resistant” fare. If planting resistant vegetables does not deter deer from your garden, consider more serious deer defenses such as barriers and fencing or visit our fact sheet Deer Damage and Control for additional options.

Plants rarely damaged
Asparagus
Carrots (root)
Chives
Cucumbers
Dill
Eggplant
Fennel
Garlic
Globe Artichokes
Lavender
Leeks
Lemon Balm
Mint
Onions
Parsley
Peppers
Rhubarb
Rosemary
Sage
Tarragon
Thyme
Tomatoes
Plants Occasionally Damaged
These plants are moderately safe, however, deer may turn to this group of veggies and herbs when favorites are not available. Take care to protect the young shoots, which are always tender and delicious!

Bok Choy
Brussels Sprouts
Chard
Corn
Kale
Melons
Okra
Potatoes (may eat toxic leaves)
Radish
Rutabagas
Summer Squash
Winter Squash
Basil
Cilantro

Deer Favorites
Apples
Beans
Beets
Berries (most kinds)
Broccoli
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Carrot (tops)
Kohlrabi
Lettuce & Leafy Greens (red lettuces less palatable)
Peas
Pears
Plums
Spinach
Strawberries
Sweet corn
Sweet Potatoes
Turnip

Revised by the UConn Home & Garden Education Center, 2016.

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