

The Most Deer Resistant Plants for Southeastern NC



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Minimizing Deer Damage

- Understanding Deer Behavior
- Repellents and Fencing
- **Most Resistant Plants**
- Consult 'Deer Resistant Plants' factsheet for deer favorites!



Understanding Deer Behavior

■ Browsers, not grazers

- Eat woody and broadleaf plants, not grasses
- Reach up to 6'

■ Creatures of habit

- Previous damage often indicates future damage potential



Deer Behavior

- No sharp upper teeth
 - Jerk stems – ragged, torn edges
 - May pull up newly planted annuals, perennials
- Picky eaters – have favorites



Deer Fencing

- Effective but expensive
- Best in high pressure areas
 - Vegetables and fruit
- **8' tall woven wire**
- **Electric**
 - Multi-wire, 10" from ground, 12" apart
 - Angled or upright
- **Plans available:**



<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/MP685>

Deer Repellents

- Repel by smell or taste
- **Must reapply often** (every few weeks to months)
- Work best when **applied before deer** problems become serious!
- Many products available - **Alternate for best results**



Zoning the Landscape

Divide landscape into zones

■ High management

- Grow plants deer most likely to damage
- Close to house
- Protect by fencing or frequent applications of repellents

■ Low management

- Use only highly deer resistant plants
- Essential next to woods



Deer Resistant Plants

- Less expensive and effective long term
- Deer prefer fertilized and irrigated plants!
- Flower buds are favorites
- Deer will eat almost anything in spring – tender new growth
- Taste preferences vary from deer to deer and season to season!



Deer Resistant Plants

- **Deer Resistant ≠ Deer Proof!**
- Deer resistant plants are those deer prefer not to eat
 - May nibble but will usually not demolish
- **Will eat most anything rather than starve!**



Large Trees

- Deer cannot reach once lowest foliage is over 6'
- May damage when young
 - Protect with cages, repellents
- Choose trees with upright branching



Ginkgo tree

Small Trees

- More likely to be damaged – branches within deer feeding range
- **Crapemyrtle**
 - Tree forms rarely damaged
 - New, shrub types sometimes damaged

'Cherry Dazzle' Crapemyrtle



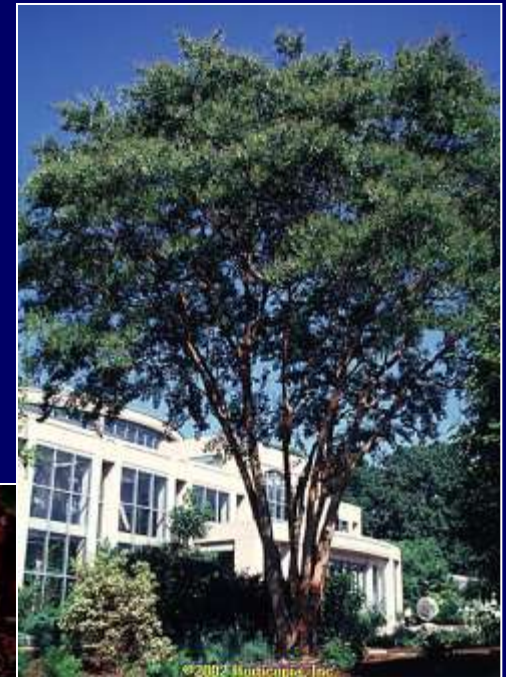
Choosing Crapemyrtles

■ Consider:

- **Mature Size**
 - Range: 5' – 35'!
- **Growth Habit**
- **Bark**
- **Fall Color**
- **Mildew Resistance**
- **Flower Color**

■ Learn more:

<http://www.clemson.edu/crapemyrtle>



Vitex, Chaste Tree

- *Vitex agnus-castus*
- Large shrub or multi-stemmed tree
- Full sun, drought tolerant
- 10'-15' high and wide
- Aromatic blue flowers all summer
- Very tough!



Vitex, Chaste Tree

When grown as a shrub,
can cut back each year
like butterfly bush (back
to 2' tall)



Tree form specimens
usually have multiple
trunks

Red Buckeye

- *Aesculus pavia*
- Native, blooms mid-spring
- 10'-20'
- Attracts hummingbirds
- Understory tree, best in part shade and moist soil



Southern Wax Myrtle

- *Morella cerifera*
- Sun – lt. shade, moist to dry soil
- 10'-15' x 10'-15'
- Dwarf forms exist
 - Variety *pumila*
- Native, Evergreen
- Exceptionally tough
- Drought, salt and pH tolerant
- Prone to ice and wind damage



Southern Wax Myrtle

Tree Form



Evergreen Shrubs

- Frequently damaged in winter
- Palms are very deer resistant. Hardy shrub palms:
 - **Dwarf palmetto**
 - native
 - **Needle palm**
 - Both grow 4'-5' tall and wide; prefer part shade and moist soil



Needle Palm



Dwarf Palmetto

Low Growing Evergreens

- Dwarf Yaupon →
 - Very small leaves
- 'Carissa' Holly →
 - Larger leaves, single spine on tip
- Both 3'-4' tall, 4'-5' wide, sun – part shade, drought tolerant



Japanese Plum Yew

Cephalotaxus harringtonia

- Shade or sun
- Well drained soil
- 'Duke Gardens' grows 3'-4' x 4'-5'
- 'Fastigiata' is an upright, columnar variety, 10' x 4'



Rosemary

- *Rosmarinus officinalis*
- **Very tough!**
- Blue flowers Feb-April
- Ornamental and culinary
- Upright and weeping cultivars available
- **Upright types** grow 4'-6' tall and wide!
- **Weeping types** grow 2'-3' tall and 4'-6' wide



Gardenia

- Sun – part shade, moist to average soil
- Most varieties 5' x 5'
- New Cultivar:
 - **'Frost Proof'**
 - 3' x 4'
 - Double flowers
 - Resistant to whitefly?



Loropetalum

- Large to small purple leaved shrubs with fringy pink spring flowers
- Best in part shade, moist, acid soil
- **'Purple Pixie'** – a true dwarf(?) Cascading habit, 2'-3' x 4'-5'
- **'Purple Diamond'** – intense purple all summer (?) 4'-5' high and wide



Cleyera

- *Ternstroemia gymnanthera*
- Sun to full shade
- 8'+ tall x 6'+ wide, to 15' tall
- Well drained soil
- Tolerates heavy pruning but more attractive when grown natural



Tea Olive

Osmanthus fragrans

- Large – 12' x 8' or more
- Can be limbed up
- Part shade, moist but well drained soil
- Flowers in fall – extremely fragrant, drifting



'William Penn' Barberry

- *Berberis x 'William Penn'*
- 4' x 4'
- Sun, well drained soil
- Drought tolerant
- Very thorny
- Bronze-purple in winter
- Yellow flowers, spring
- New growth flushed burgundy



'William Penn' Barberry



Ornamental Grasses

- As a group, ornamental grasses are **highly deer resistant**
- Low maintenance – cut back in Jan/Feb
- Most need full sun



Many beyond Pampas Grass!!!

Muhly Grass

Muhlenbergia capillaris

- 3' - 4' tall in bloom
- Blooms late fall
- Well drained soil
- Sun!
- Drought tolerant
- Semi-evergreen, cut back late winter

'White Cloud'



Panic Grass, Switch Grass

- *Panicum virgatum*
- Native to E. US
- Full sun, drought tolerant
- **'Prairie Fire'**
3' x 2', burgundy leaf tips
- **'Northwind'**
5' x 2', upright
- **'Cloud Nine'**
large, 8' x 6', strong stems



'Northwind'

Miscanthus, Maiden Grass

- *Miscanthus sinensis*
- Large fall blooming grasses
- Many selections ranging from 3' – 8'
 - **'Cosmopolitan'** – 5' -7', white variegated leaf
 - **'Adagio'** – 3'-4', narrow green leaf



Deer Resistant Perennials



Artemisia

'Powis Castle'

- 2'-3' x 3'-4'
- Mounds of silver, finely cut foliage
- Sun
- Drought tolerant
- Evergreen but cut back in early spring to prevent legginess



Yucca, Adam's Needle

- *Yucca filamentosa*
- Evergreen
- 2' x 2', summer flower spikes to 5'
- This species NEVER FORMS TRUNKS
- Drought tolerant



'Color Guard'
cream
variegated
foliage



False Indigo

- *Baptisia* - hybrids and species
- 3' - 4' x 2' - 3'
- Sun to light shade
- Bloom late April - May
- Very long lived, clump forming



'Purple Smoke'



'Carolina Moonlight'



Gaura

- *Gaura lindheimeri*
- Many varieties
- ‘Pink Cloud’ – 3’ x 2’
- ‘So White’ – 2’ x 2’
- Full sun
- Poor soil
- Deer resistant
- Texas native
- Blooms from late spring through late summer



Arkansas Blue Star

- *Amsonia hubrichtii*
- 3' x 3'
- Sun, native
- Long lived, clump forming
- Flowers in spring
- Yellow autumn color
- Attractive, ferny foliage all season
- Long lasting cutflower



Blue Star

Amsonia tabernaemontana

- SE US native
- Moist to average soils
- Sun to part shade
- Long lived
- Good cutflower
- 3' x 3'
- Blooms spring, yellow fall color
- *Amsonia illustris* – very similar



'Maraschino' Sage

- *Salvia microphylla*
- 3'-4' x 2'-4'
- Sun to light shade
- Blooms spring and fall
 - Trim after blooming
- Cut back in late winter
- Great for hummingbirds



Mexican Bush Sage

Salvia leucantha

- 4' x 6' tall and wide
- 'Santa Barbara'
 - 3' tall and wide
- Sun
- Well drained soil, drought tolerant
- Fall blooming
- Loves heat!



Turk's Cap, Wax Mallow

- *Malvaviscus drummondii*
- Sun – light shade
- 4'-5' tall and wide
- Red blossoms summer – fall
- Great for hummingbirds, butterflies
- Drought tolerant



Hardy Ferns

- Deer rarely browse ferns
- Most prefer moist, shady areas
- **Japanese Painted Fern**
 - *Athyrium niponicum*
'Pictum'
 - Deciduous – dies down in winter



Evergreen Ferns

■ Holly Fern

- *Cyrtomium falcatum*

■ Autumn Fern

- *Dryopteris erythrosora*

■ Christmas Fern

- *Polystichum acrostichoides*



Holly Fern



Autumn Fern



Christmas Fern

A few more for shade

■ Leopard Plant

- *Farfugium japonicum*
- Clumps of evergreen, round spotted leaves topped with yellow daisy shape flowers in fall

■ Lenten Rose

- *Helleborus x hybridus*
- White, pink or maroon nodding flowers in late winter. Evergreen foliage



Deer Resistant Summer Annuals



Melampodium

- Tough, easy to grow
- Tolerates drought and poor soil
 - Native of Mexico
- Often self sow
- Varieties
 - ‘Million Gold’, 12”
 - ‘Showstar’, to 18”



'Profusion'

Zinnias

- Hybrid between creeping and common zinnia
- Great disease resistance
- 15"-18" with mounded habit
- All zinnia good nectar source for butterflies



'Profusion Apricot'

'Profusion' Zinnia



**'Profusion
Fire'**



**'Profusion
White'**



**'Profusion
Cherry'**



Ornamental Peppers

- Many varieties
 - Most are hot
 - *Capsicum annuum*
- Easy to grow
- Great in containers



'Black Pearl'



Wax Begonia

- Very adaptable and tough
- Sun or shade, drought tolerant
- Bronze and Green leaf varieties
- White, pink, red flowers
- Stiff, upright to 1'



Periwinkle, Vinca

Catharanthus roseus

- Loves heat
- Requires good drainage
- Many varieties
 - ‘Mediterranean’ – low grower, groundcover, baskets
 - ‘Pacifica’ - upright to 12”, many colors
 - Blush, orchid, red, lilac, polka dot, white
- Often self seeds, but reverts to purple





Plants to Avoid!!

Deer Favorites

Deer Favorites Small Trees

- Redbud
- Atlantic White Cedar
- Fringe Tree
- Fruit Trees

Fringe Tree



Redbud

Deer Favorites Shrubs

- Indian Hawthorn
- Pittosporum
- Euonymous (all)
- Fatsia
- Aucuba
- Azaleas
- Itea

Indian Hawthorn

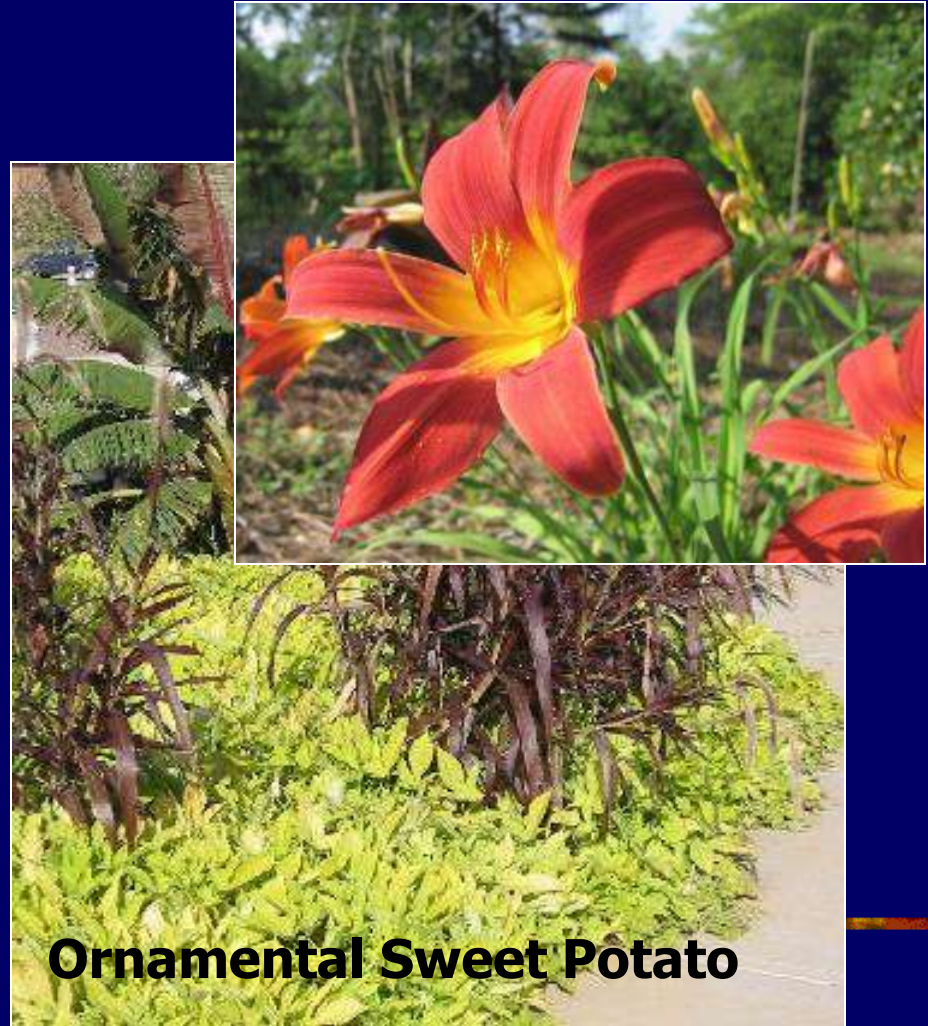


Itea

Deer Favorites

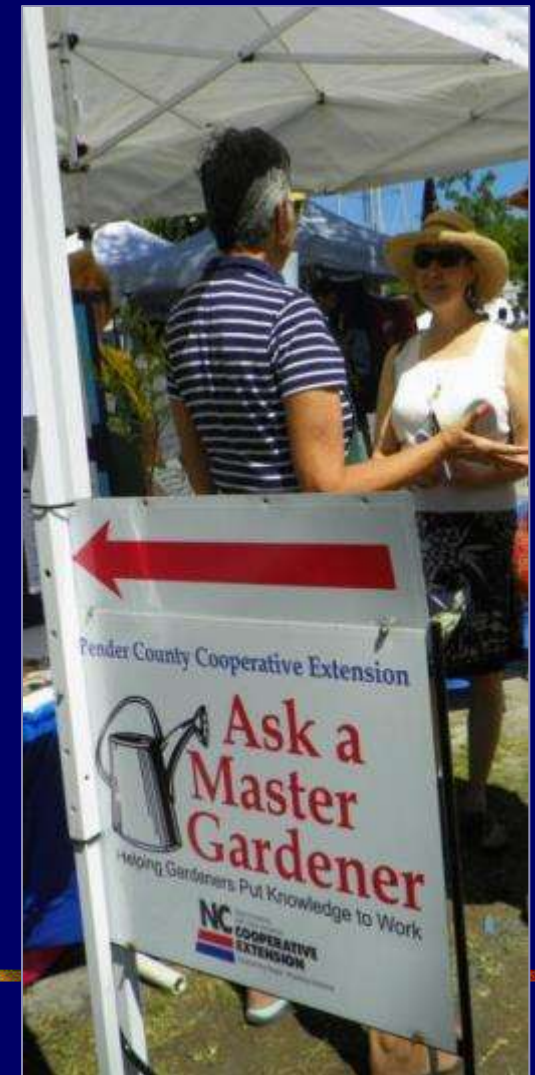
Annuals and Perennials

- Ornamental Sweet Potato
- Impatiens
- Celosia
- Pansies
- Daylilies
- Hosta
- Rudbeckia 'Goldsturm'
- Ivy
- Clematis



Become an Extension Master Gardener!

- Volunteer program – EMG's help with educational outreach
- Training begins late winter
- Classes meet 1/week at Extension office for 12-14 weeks
- Fee: \$75-\$100
- Volunteer 40 hours within 1 year of completing training



North Carolina Cooperative Extension



Visit <http://ces.ncsu.edu>

to submit questions to our '**Ask an Expert**' widget
and to find your local Extension center

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