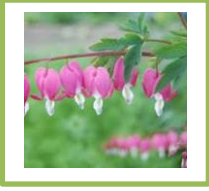


Perennials That Deer Avoid in the Garden



Bleeding hearts (*Lamprocapnos spectabilis*; USDA Zones 3–9) may be old-fashioned, but they're a great choice if you have deer problems. The common bleeding heart is beautiful, although it goes dormant in summer, so it will need companions that can fill the gap. Also resistant to rabbits and squirrels.



Catmint (*Nepeta*), proves true to its name with minty-scented foliage. The fragrance is an excellent defense against deer. Likes sun for best flowering. Summer-long purple flowers offer a colorful bonus. You can increase its re-blooming power with a light shearing as the initial wave of flowers fades.



Sun King Aralia, named Perennial Plant of the Year in 2020, golden Japanese spikenard (*Aralia cordata* 'Sun King'; Zones 4–8) continues to gain popularity, for good reason. The bright chartreuse leaves pop in shaded areas, and the rough feel of its foliage discourages deer.



Ornamental Alliums, durable in many ways, alliums are great in gardens with sandy soil or deer, which usually turn from their onion-like scent. Most people are familiar with the early blooming varieties but there are later flowering varieties the fibrous-rooted, clump-forming alliums offer lots of purple blooms in late summer and dense, lustrous foliage from spring to fall. Some excellent cultivars among these later-blooming allium include 'Lavender Bubbles' (Zones 4–8), 'Millenium' and 'Windy City' (both Zones 5–8). Clumping alliums can be planted any time during the growing season, in full sun and average soil. Once established they tolerate drought.



Ornamental Grasses Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepsis*; Zones 3–9), for its dwarf habit and sprays of tan blooms that float above the foliage in late summer; and the switchgrasses 'Heavy Metal', 'Shenandoah' and 'Cheyenne Sky' (cultivars of *Panicum virgatum*; Zones 4–9), all medium-sized plants with intense fall color.