DEER RESISTANT NATIVE PLANTS FOR THE CENTRAL SIERRA FOOTHILLS

Deer can be a problem at any time in your garden. They are often more of a problem in the seasons when your plants provide some of the limited amount of green vegetation available. They were here first and can hardly be blamed for relishing your roses. Rabbits too can cause a problem and many of these suggestions apply to deterring them as well.

There are a number of plants that deer may eat occasionally and others that they rarely will touch. Generally, they relish the new growth, leaving the mature leaves behind. Since they are browsing animals, they may devour a plant in your garden and then walk right past the same species in your neighbor’s garden.

However, deer will browse on most NEW plantings regardless of taste. So, it’s a good idea to protect the young plants with some type of wire cage. After two years, or so, when the plants are established and of a larger size, remove the wire cage in late summer. At that time when the deer come to browse, many native plants are in their dormancy period. The leaves are mature and tough and not very tasty. The “pruning” of the branch tips by the deer in late July and August generally does little harm to the health and future growth of the mature plant—unless the deer population is excessive.

Various methods have been used to attempt to discourage deer. Most have presented some problems and had limited success. Sprinkling the plants with dry blood meal, lion scent and other bad smelling materials works only for short periods and these wash off with rain. Fish line between trees, sunflower or corn mazes and movement activated sprinkles interfere with other garden activities. Fences must be about eight feet high with no places to squeeze under or through. Such fences are expensive. A nearby water source encourages deer but lack of one does not discourage them.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE TREES

Abies species   White Fir, Grand Fir
Acer macrophyllum   Big-leaf Maple
Acer negundo var. californicum   Box Elder
Arbutus menziesii   Madrone
Calocedrus decurrens   Incense Cedar
Chamaecyparis lawsoniana   Lawson Cypress
Juniperus spp   all native species, trees & shrubs
Uothocarpus densiflorus   Tan Oak
Pinus spp.   Ponderosa, Jeffrey, others
Platanus racemosa   California Sycamore
Pseudotsuga menziesii   Douglas Fir
Quercus spp.   Valley, Interior Live, Blue & other oaks
Umbellularia californica   California Bay

CALIFORNIA NATIVE SHRUBS

Arctostaphylos species   all manzanitas: groundcovers & shrubs
Baccharis pilularis   Coyote Brush
Berberis aquifolium & others   Oregon-grape; Barberry
Calycanthus occidentalis   Spicebush
Carpenteria californica   Tree-Anemone
Ceanothus spp.   small leaf varieties
Cercis occidentalis   Western Redbud
Dendromecon rigida   Bush Poppy
### CALIFORNIA NATIVE SHRUBS (CONT.)

- **Fremontodendron californicum**
- **Garrya elliptica**
- **Gaultheria shallon**
- **Heteromeles arbutifolia**
- **Holodiscus discolor**
- **Lupinus albifrons**
- **Myrica californica**
- **Rhamnus californica**
- **Rhododendron occidentale**
- **Rhus ovata**
- **Ribes spp.**
- **Romneya coulteri**
- **Rubus parviflorus**
- **Trichostema lanatum**

### CALIFORNIA NATIVE PERENNIALS, BULBS AND GRASSES

- **Achillea millefolium**
- **Armeria maritima**
- **Artemisia pycnocephala**
- **Bulbs: such as Brodiaea, Triteleia, Dichelostemma**
- **Chlorogalum pomeridianum**
- **Carex spp.**
- **Dicentra Formosa**
- **Eschscholzia californica**
- **Ferns (all native species)**
- **Festuca californica & F. rubra**
- **Fragaria spp.**
- **Iris (all native species)**
- **Mimulus (all native species)**
- **Monardella villosa & others**
- **Muhlenbergia rigens**
- **Nassella lepida & N. pulchra**
- **Potentilla spp. (Cinquefoil)**
- **Salvia clevelandii etc.**
- **Sisyrinchium spp.**
- **Tellima grandiflora**
- **Zauschneria californica (Epilobium)**

*Adapted from a list compiled by Mary Anderson by the Education Committee of the Sierra Foothills Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. Sept. 2005*