

Cleomes -

a wonderful deer resistant flower!

Ah! Sitting on the patio admiring your garden efforts in exquisitely beautiful Vancouver Island is a dream. As much as we all whine about the bugs on our roses, the lack of vegetable production (or the excess vegetable production), you have to admit there is no place in the world as nice as the Cowichan Valley in summer.

Today I was admiring the fantastic flowers on the Lucifer Crocosmia. Bright screaming red enthusiastic blooms were all over the plants in spite of the low watering regime and lack of care and attention. When I invited Mr. Big to enjoy them he remarked, "Ah what flowers?" Indeed twenty minutes after admiring them they were gone. Thank you rotten bambies!

Why do the deer have to take out all the pretty flowers and leave us with nothing? Argggg!!! Well I have one treat to report. There is one annual flower that the bambies do not care for. Here I will issue the reminder that advice on deer applies most of the time to most of the deer. Many times a deer under stress will eat stuff they usually hate, and fawns bite everything and often spit it out.



BUT! Try Cleomes. These plants known as spider flower are sticky and prickly. These characteristics are unappealing to deer. The term spider flower refers to the shape of the leaves. However the cleome repels bad insects in your garden as well as deer. The flowers are held on the top of the stem in a spray of individual pink or purple blooms resembling a sparkler. There is even a variety called sparklers.

Cleomes bloom here in mid to late summer and will continue on well into the fall. They seed profusely so save your seeds for next year!

Fran Benton

