

Two Good Deer-Proof Friends by Fran Benton

I know what you are saying -there is no such thing as a deer proof plant! Well deer will eat almost anything if they are desperate but there are some plants that deer just do not like. Here are two that really work! Plant number one is a plant you already know – Yucca. This is a tough old buzzard of a plant that is easy to grow and tolerates drought and neglect. Yet, if you take care of it there will be glorious flowers and healthy growth that you will be proud of! Yucca is an architectural plant that looks fantastic in a rock garden or border. It originally comes from the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and south Atlantic states. It has many of varieties including the famed Joshua Tree. The petals of Yucca can be eaten and are featured in several Mexican dishes. I always enjoy how plants are categorized and believe it or not the Yucca is in the Asparagus family! Yucca grows in my front yard and even tolerates damp heavy soil and a north facing location.



My second deer proof hero is New Zealand Daisy Bush (*Brachyglottis greyi*). This lovely plant does in fact come from New Zealand. It is also tough. Its leaves have a fuzzy white underside. Deer are not fond of fuzzy plants. It has big clusters of cheerful yellow daisy flowers and blooms energetically in the summer. It grows in a scruffy disheveled manner, so I think of it as a Rambler. It spreads about six or seven feet and grows about 4 feet high. This plant tolerates pruning quite well so you can shape it. It is not hard to propagate from cuttings.

Oh and just for good measure here is another deer proof (and rabbit proof) plant that looks good beside your yucca and NZ daisy bush - Jupiter's Beard (*Centranthus ruber*). It's a perennial that will come up year after year, tolerates drought and can be shaped and trimmed to look good!

So you see there is no point to sit in your house giving the deer "stink eye" when you can plant these guys and be smug!

Happy gardening!