

KEEP DEER OUT OF YOUR YARD

— *Naturally*



There's something restorative about spending summer days outdoors. The daylight lasts longer, the weather is warmer and the lush, green landscape becomes accented with dazzling flowers just about everywhere you look. The challenge is making sure the visual feast doesn't become a literal feast for deer.

"As a home gardener, I spent a fortune on deer repellents," said Green Spring master gardener and naturalist Alda Krinsman as she reflected on the challenge with a growing deer population at her former New Jersey home. "It got to the point where I didn't even buy tulip bulbs to plant. I gave up."

Many Fairfax County residents have also experienced the maddening frustration of losing beautiful blooms, shrubs and vegetables to hungry deer. Krinsman says one way to help prevent that from happening this year is to plant annuals and perennials that deter deer.

"Most plants in the mint family or plants that have strong, herbal scents tend to keep them away," Krinsman said. "Agastaches and mountain mint are some of my favorites."

Hummingbird mint, catmint and anise hyssop are among other colorful, fragrant plants that deer don't like. An added benefit is that they attract hummingbirds, butterflies and essential garden pollinators.

Deer also tend to turn their noses up at foliage with prickly or sharp leaves. "Plants with fuzzy leaves such as lantanas or plants with an irritating leaf they won't eat." Krinsman said. They also won't eat daffodils, foxgloves and hellebores because these plants are poisonous to deer.

The Garden Gate Plant Shop at Green Spring Gardens has a wide selection of deer resistant plants for sale. The shop features plants that grow well in Northern Virginia, including those that are featured in the park's gardens, and plant experts are usually available on Saturday mornings to help with plant selections and to offer gardening advice. The shop is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

Mark your calendar for Spring Garden Day at Green Spring Gardens, Saturday, May 18 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This popular event offers beautiful and unusual plants from more than 40 local garden vendors to fill your seasonal gardening needs.

Hummingbird mint



Lantanas



Catmint

