



Living With Deer

The Conservation Seedling Nursery



What Deer Eat

Deer are browsers with a diverse palate that includes flowers, grasses, shrubs, and tree seedlings. However, their stomachs are not efficient in digesting fibrous materials. As a result, they feed on plants rich in concentrated, easily digestible nutrients, adjusting their diet with the changing seasons. Year-round, they selectively pick the most nutritious plants and parts.

While some plants are not as palatable as others, **deer will eat nearly anything non-toxic when in need.** Rest assured, we do not produce any species toxic to deer.

For example, deer can even consume seemingly unpalatable plants like Woods' Rose, despite its thorns.

Plants Deer Dislike

The following plants are less favored by deer, but are still susceptible to deer predation.

- Austrian Pine
- Caragana
- Colorado Blue Spruce
- Engelmann Spruce
- Douglas-fir
- Eastern Red Cedar
- Scotch Pine
- Water Birch
- Lodgepole Pine

More Resources

[Forest Service
Comparison of Deer Repellents](#)

[Montana State University
Non-Chemical Deer Control](#)

Types of Deer Deterrents

The Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery does not sell supplies to protect seedlings from deer

Seedling Protector Tubes



- Can be purchased from a forestry supplier
- Protector tubes are affordable but shipping can be expensive
- Zip tie protector tubes to bamboo stake
- Protects seedlings for up to 5 years
- Allow tube to extend 10 - 12in. above seedling
- **Homemade protector tubes can be made from chicken wire**

Plant Skydd



- Sold at most hardware stores or online
- Made of pig's blood
- Reapply every 2 - 4 weeks during growing season or when new growth appears
- Apply every 3 months in dormant season

Trico



- Sold online
- Made of liquid sheep's fat
- Applied twice a year