

Deer Resistant Shade Garden: A new garden for a common problem

by Teresa Craighead



Do you have a garden with multiple issues? Issues that require giving special attention to plant selection? A common combination of problems in and around Tompkins County is shade in gardens often visited by deer. What do you plant that will thrive in shade and be less browsed by these white-tailed terrors?

A new garden located on the Route 13 side of the Tompkins County Cooperative Extension building at 615 Willow Avenue, is designed to showcase plants that

are deer resistant and do well in shade. In spring 2022, old landscaping was removed and new plants were installed. Many of the plants were donated by Tompkins County Master Gardener Volunteers who have successfully grown them in their own deer-endangered gardens. These are tried and true plants to grow in your garden, but always remember that deer will sample anything once and eat everything if they are hungry enough!



Yellow Corydalis

Although 70 plants were initially included some have been temporarily removed to make way for a building repair and painting project. They will be back! In the meantime, future plans include:

- Installing additional plants as facility-related projects allow. Watch for them!

- Labeling plants. New aluminum plant tags are sprouting in many of the TCCE gardens, not just the Deer Resistant Shade Garden, and we plan to continue this effort as plants are added.
- Creating an online plant list.
- Developing a printed brochure with information about the garden and a link to the online plant list.
- Designing and installing a sign depicting the garden theme.



Heuchera (Coral Bells) and Lamium (Dead Nettles)

Here are just a few of the plants you will see in the garden depending on when you visit.

Spring:

- *Narcissus* 'Tete a Tete' (daffodil)
- Hellebores (*Hellebore x hybridus* [Lenten Rose] and *Helleborus foetidus* [Stinking Hellebore])

From CCE Tompkins Garden Post, Sept 2023

- *Iris cristata* (Crested Iris)
- Primroses
- Bleeding Hearts (*Dicentra eximia* and *Lamprocapnos spectabilis*)

Summer:

- Various Astilbes
- Corydalis
- Perennial Geraniums
- A selection of Heuchera (Coral Bells)

Fall:

- *Eurybia divaricata* (White Wood Aster)
- Colchicum (future)
- *Actaea matsumurae* 'White Pearl'
- *Kirengeshoma palmata*



Pulmonaria

From CCE Tompkins Garden Post, Sept 2023

Throughout the growing season, ferns (Japanese Painted, Ghost, Lady, Maidenhair, Autumn and Christmas) create visual flow and repetition.

Stop by and take a look at this evolving garden to find plants that deer don't like but that do like shade!



Brunnera 'Looking Glass'



Ghost Fern