



Perennia Landscaping

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Why have a horticulturist design your garden? What do you need to know?

A frequently ignored fact is that flowering evergreens, with few rare exceptions, only flower from April until June. Only the Rhododendron Maximum (Rosebay or Native Rhododendron), a large growing, shade-loving evergreen native to Westchester, flowers in July. It is not a good plant for foundation plantings because of its eventual size. Many of these spring- flowering evergreens are *not* deer resistant.

The key to success for an interesting and colorful garden is to know which deer-resistant plants are available. One can use deciduous shrubs, perennials, and bulbs for flowering from early spring until frost. These species will flower and/or provide brilliant fall color, from June to November. It is also important to choose some plants for the color, texture, and shape of their foliage. There are deer resistant evergreens that do not flower but have striking blue, yellow, aqua, and variegated foliage all year. There are a great variety of both deciduous and evergreen plants whose foliage and stems display a diversity of size, shape, texture, and color.

It is also important to use many species of plants. A good plan would include deer resistant plants using evergreen trees and shrubs, deciduous trees and shrubs, and perennials and ornamental grasses. It is common practice among professionals and amateurs to use many of the same plant to create a mass effect. They will make a design for fifty plants but only use five or six species. It is far better aesthetically to use twenty species of plants and have less of each and still have a total of fifty plants.

Some plants look better alone; these are known as specimen plants. One, two, or three of each species of tree and shrub, both evergreen and deciduous, and groupings of five or six perennials will give the color, variety, and interest needed. There are also deer proof bulbs. These can be used in large or small groups for color and interest in the early spring when most other plants have still yet to flower.

In short, an experienced horticulturist stays informed of what plants are available, and keeps a keen eye toward what the deer are eating. There are new and interesting species added to the list of nursery stock every year.