

SEEDS FOR MALAWI REPORT

Compiled by Susan Evans – April, 2010

My Experience with Deer-Resistant Plants

by Arlene Ommundsen

Part Three of Four

Plants of low deer preference may include those that are low in nutritional value, those that contain toxins and those that have an unpleasant smell or taste.

A number of plants that the deer don't much care for are grey in colour, such as *Santolina chamaecyparissus* (lavender cotton), *Stachys lanata* (lambs ears), *Helichrysum italicum** (curry plant), *Senecio cineraria* (dusty miller), and *Lychnis coronaria* (rose campion), although the deer do eat the *Lychnis* flowers. Grey colour is no guarantee of protection though, as my young *Artemisia* plants are eaten.

Many grey plants are also very drought-tolerant and prefer full sun. Two of my favourites are *Phlomis italica** (pink phlomis) and *Phlomis fruticosa* (Jerusalem sage). They may be borderline



ARLENE OMMUNDSEN

Phlomis italica

hardy in higher elevation areas. *Phlomis russeliana**, with its green leaves, is hardier but susceptible to grazing.

Rosmarinus officinalis, both the upright and trailing rosemary, are ignored by the deer in my sunny garden, but I haven't been as fortunate with lavender. The deer eat the new growth on my English lavender so I don't get flowers until late in the summer. *Lavandula stoechas* (French lavender) has been ignored thus far.

Perovskia atriplicifolia (Russian sage) is another sun-lover that is ignored by deer if not cut down to the ground in the fall. Sprays of flowers can be removed at the end of the season.

Perennial *Verbascum chaixii* (nettle-leafed mullein) is also deer-resistant and is available in different colours. It is one of the few truly perennial mulleins and does well in poor soil though it needs some water.

Gravillea banksii from New Zealand has very fine needle-like leaves and red flowers. It will take full sun but is tolerant of partial shade and very drought resistant. It requires protection while small.

Buxus sempervirens 'Suffruticosa' (English boxwood) is ignored by the deer in our area but unfortunately they eat the variegated form.

No garden would be complete without some winter flowering

Volunteer Profile

by Donna Cochran

Margaret Munk

is this month's **Seeds for Malawi** volunteer and it is easy to say she has done almost every task possible with the project. She is one of the original Steering Committee members and has been part of the team that moves plants, sets up and cleans up for Plant Sales and Garden Club meetings. For many years she was on the winter nursery crew helping to pot up and clean plants for the new sales year until her hands complained a little too much in the cold forcing her to cut back a bit. But she continues with all her other talents.

Margaret has made a steady supply of angels and her beautiful handmade slippers have sold very well at the Fulford Christmas Craft Fair. With so many generous donors, sending thank you cards is an important task which she handles. Margaret is one of the familiar, smiling faces at **Seeds for Malawi** events, always there to lend a hand.

Thanks for your generosity, Marg!

hellebores. They do give off a mild sulphurous odour that may discourage deer but is hardly noticeable to us. They prefer some shade but can tolerate a fair amount of sun if given sufficient water, and their flowers are long lasting. *Helleborus corsicus** grows to two to three feet with tough leaves and large blooms. *Helleborus orientalis** is only 24 inches high but its flowers come in many colours as well as doubles.

*Iris foetidissima**, with its bright orange seed pods, is the only iris that I can grow outside the fence. The deer eat my Pacific coast iris flowers, but a neighbour with dogs is more successful at keeping blooms. Another safe plant with an iris-like shape is *Libertia grandiflora*. It likes full sun and has white blooms. The bulb *Leucojum aestivum* (Summer snowflake) also has white flowers and blooms in late spring.

Chrysanthemum maximun (Shasta daisy) is generally ignored year round. Scented geraniums are another safe plant but not reliably hardy every year on Salt Spring.

In the next installment I will discuss further examples of plants of low deer preference, plus browse-tolerant plants.

Happy gardening!

NOTE: PLANTS MARKED WITH * ARE AVAILABLE FROM S4M

S4M NOW HAS A BASIC WEBSITE
www.seedsformalawi.org

Plant Inventories (for Salt Spring Island and for Mill Bay) are posted on the website.
Plant Sales (on Salt Spring Island and at Mill Bay) will be held on April 24.