

## Gardening Question and Answer

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Q. What are some deer-proof plants we can use in our landscape? We have both sun and shade. The deer population is growing and getting more aggressive? Are there any roses that they won't eat?

A. As far as I can tell they will eat every rose, including the thorniest climbing varieties. It is also difficult to identify completely deer-proof. The list changes and is different in various situations and locales. The usually deer-proof includes sago palm, Texas mountain laurel, sandankwa viburnum, Mexican honeysuckle, primrose jasmine, iris, esperanza, thyrallis, lantana, salvia, vinca, oleander, boxwood, pittosporum, Mexican oregano, most yuccas, prickly pear, and vitex.

Q. My son got us some firewood from his deer lease. It is nice oak but is still moist from being cut this fall. We can't tell for sure if it is red oak and whether it was killed by oak wilt. What is the best way to handle it to protect the wonderful oaks in our neighborhood from oak wilt?

A. The threat is if the firewood was a oak wilt killed red oak that may form a fungal mat that produces spores to be carried to new wounds by sap beetles this spring. Wrap the pile in clear plastic that seals the spores in, the beetles out and contributes to drying the wood. You can use the firewood this winter from out of the covered pile. The pile should be dried enough by next winter not to be a threat.

Q. All the blooms were frozen off our snapdragons, stocks, and pansies. The foliage looks good. Do we keep fertilizing and irrigating the flower garden for the rest of the winter?

A. Yes, the pansies should resume blooming pretty quickly. The snaps and stocks will bloom later in the spring if the foliage is maintained.

Q. Can we keep harvesting our greens such as kale, collards, and chard during the cold weather periods, or do we need to wait until the plants start growing again.

A. At some point you will have to wait for the plants to produce new foliage to harvest but you can keep harvesting as long as you leave some foliage on the plant.

Q. We have just taken possession of our new house. It needs a new lawn. Can we use sod at this time of the year? What grass do you recommend? The backyard is in full sun and the front is shady.

A. Sod can be applied now if it is obtained from a reliable source. Till compost into the soil and add 5lbs of winterizer fertilizer to each 100-sq. ft. of area. Lay the sod and roll it to provide good root to soil contact. The grass will probably not green up until spring but water enough to

keep the sod and soil moist. Once/week may be enough if the weather is cold and we receive rain. Use Bermuda grass in the backyard and St Augustine in the front because of the shade.