

## SHADE GARDENING

# GARDENING IN SHADE

Most gardeners will eventually face the problem of shade in part of the landscape. Either because of trees that have overgrown in part of the landscape, the presence of a tall fence, shade beds on the shady side of the home, overhangs, or a woodland situation, these situations call for a different outlook on gardening and different expectations.

Shady areas naturally bring feelings of calm and relaxation, in addition to feelings of closeness and reflection. With the right combination of trees, shrubs and perennials, along with their proper placement, and the addition of accessories, such as bird baths, statuary, and seating nooks, shady areas can be places that draw you in and prompt us to sit, relax, and enjoy these special places.

**Shade caused by different situations call for varying approaches to filling the space.**

**Deep Shade:** Areas that get less than 2-3 hours of sun a day. Plants naturally grow more slowly here, and plants not adapted to the shade grow slowly, sparsely and usually do not flower. Excess soil wetness and dryness can be a problem.

**Part Shade, Morning Sun:** Areas that get 3-6 hours of full sun, before noon. The sun is usually not too high and not intense. Many Hydrangeas thrive in this situation, as do Rhododendrons and Azaleas.

**Dappled Sun:** Similar to part shade, these areas get a dappled pattern of 3-6 hours of sun throughout the day from a high broken canopy of overhead trees. The ideal situation for a woodland garden, or for plants that grow well in part to full shade.

**Part Shade Afternoon Sun:** Areas that get 3-6 hours of the more intense afternoon sun. Not suitable for deep shade plants but great for part sun to full sun plants. Soil more likely to be drier and plants more vigorous. Panicked Hydrangeas and woodland 'edge' plants like red-buds or dogwoods thrive here.

**Soils:** Soils in shady areas can experience extremes in moisture. Too wet in the spring and too dry as summer and fall progress. The addition of organic matter at planting and yearly additions help moderate soil moisture, develop a healthy topsoil layer and insulate plants from temperature extremes. Many broadleaved evergreens require an acid, high organic soil to thrive, so require special treatment. This is true of Hollies, Rhododendrons, Azaleas and trees such as dogwood and Eastern Hemlock, to name a few.

**Water:** As mentioned above soil moisture is important to plants growing in shade, especially in Columbus' heavy clay soils. When clay soil is wet it can suffocate a plants roots and cause root rot. When dry, they are hard to water and require slow extended watering to properly hydrate. Watering issues are the number one issue in shady areas. Proper soil

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### Water, cont'd

...and a realistic assessment of the soils is essential to plant survival. Also, when installing plants beneath or near established trees or shrubs, be aware that the established plants will 'steal' enormous amounts of soil moisture and nutrients from the new plants, making it harder for those plants to establish and thrive. You may have to greatly increase watering, and /or dig a much larger planting hole to give the new plant time to 'take'.

**Effects of shade on plant form:** All plants crave sunlight . It is the 'coffee buzz' of the plant world that drives vigorous growth, true leaf shape, flowering and fruiting. Trees and shrubs that grow full and thick in the sun, may grow much more spindly and sparse in the shade. This is because they cannot produce the needed energy, (from the lack of sun) so all their plant processes slow down to compensate. Heavy fertilizers or more watering will not help.

For example, Spicebush, which grows lush and full in the sun , is in reality a deep shade plant. In the shade it is sparse and it's leaves are deep green and flowers in spring with a pretty yellow bloom. This is it's true form, not the lush, full sun look. Herbaceous plants adapted to the shade are more lush and will fill a shady space very effectively to compliment the taller layer of shrubs and trees.

**Planting in Shade Areas:** When planning for shady areas, do your homework and consult the many information sources available to you. Also look at what others have done in their shady areas. Visit gardens, arboretums and parks to see what grows where. Also, consider pressure from small animals and deer, and be ready to fence new plantings.

Planting in layers will bring interest and density to plantings, and bring color and texture throughout the season. A low area of perennials, in front of a taller area of shrubs and small trees will create areas of varying colors and textures. This will make the area more inviting to songbirds and pollinators. Don't forget to include a birdbath, water feature, statue, or bench to the area. Turning a bare shade area into a secret garden sanctuary is the best expression of the gardening art.

Below are lists of plants that do well in shade situations. Plants that will thrive in deep shade are marked with an asterisk '\*'. Ps = part shade sh = full shade

### Trees

Hedge Maple ps	*Vine Maple sh	Serviceberry sh	American Hornbeam sh
Flowering Dogwood ps	Pagoda Dogwood sh	Contorted Filbert ps	Witchhazel sh *Spicebush sh
*Paw Paw sh	Sweetbay Magnolia ps	Stewartia ps	Redbud ps
American Snowbell ps	*Beech sh	Japanese Maple ps	American Holly ps

### Evergreen Trees

Hemlock sh	Hinoki Falsecypress ps	Norway Spruce ps	Hick's Yew sh
	Umberella Pine		

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**Shrubs**

*Five-leafed Aralia	*Bottlebrush Buckeye	Beautyberry ps	Clethra ps
Tatarian Dogwood ps	Silky Dogwood ps	Gray Dogwood ps	
Redtwig Dogwood ps	Redosier Dogwood ps	Witchhazel ps	Daphne ps
Bush honeysuckle sh	Burning bush ps	Wintercreeper sh	Manhattan Euony-
mous ps	Fothergilla ps	Smooth Hydrangea sh	Bigleaf Hydrangea spp. ps
Oakleaf Hydrangea ps	Sweetspire ps	Kerria sh	*Spicebush
Fragrant Sumac ps	Alpine Currant ps	Snowberry sh	Jetbead ps
Blueberry ps	Viburnum spp. ps to sh		Stephandra p

**Evergreen Shrubs**

Azalea ps	*Boxwood sh	Enkianthus sh	Blue Holly ps	Leucothoe sh
Mahonia ps	Pieris ps	Rhododendron sh	Cherry Laurel ps	Inkberry ps to sh
Japanese Holly		*Yew spp.		

**Vines**

Chocolate Vine ps	Porcelain berry sh	Dutchman's Pipe ps	Cross-vine ps
Trumpetcreeper ps	Hydrangea vine sh	Honeysuckle vine ps	
Virginia Creeper sh	Wisteria ps	Moonseed ps	
Japanese Climbing Hydrangea sh		Wintercreeper sh	

**Woodland perennials**

Bellwort	Bloodroot	Cardinal Flower	Dutchman's Breeches	Foamflower
Fringed Bleeding Heart		Harebell	Jack-in-the-Pulpet	Jacobs Ladder
Lungwort	Meadow Rue	Rue Anemone	Snakeroot	Solomon's Seal
Spring Beauty	Trillium	Trout Lily	Virginia Blue Bells	Wild Columbine
Wild Violets				

**Other Perennials**

Allium	Astilbe	Goatsbeard	Bergenia	Brunnera
Bleeding Heart		Corydalis	Ferns	Mums ps
Forget-me-Nots		Foamy Bells	Hosta	Lenten Rose
Meadowsweet		Monarda ps	Globeflower	Spurge
Tiarella	Liriope	Dead Nettle		Blue Violet

**Grasses**

Sweet Flag	Japanese Forest Grass	Sedges	Clump Bamboo
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