

SIZZLING SUMMER SHADE PLANTS

- Get the right plants for the right space..... How much sun do you actually get? Watch your area and see how much and when it gets direct sun in the summer, this will help you find the right plants. Remember that many “shade” plants do just as well in some sun in the garden.
- Be honest with yourself..... Will you water it regularly or not so much? Many of these woodland shade type plants will like moist well-drained soil, but there are some things that are drought tolerant. We can use these in dry shade, even under established trees. Be sure to water them somewhat regularly to get established, then you can start infrequent watering. Keep in mind this tip – a great time to plant drier areas is in fall when rains over winter will help get these established before the next summer comes.
- Brighten up your shady areas with some bold colors – lots of variegated plants/bright foliage options available to gardeners, especially in the shade. These will glow and really pop in shady landscapes. Most all plants have variegated cultivars available, or if you like shades of green that is fine as well. Look at not only foliage color but shape and size as well. Mixing a bunch of different greens with different textures and size can be just as attractive in a shade garden.
- Incorporate shrubs and conifers specimens for structure and backgrounds, then accent with perennials/grasses/annuals. Look at the area and picture year around “presence” with shrubs, and then play off the specimens you choose to highlight foliage with color and variegation during seasons. Lots and lots of cool combinations can be done that will suit YOUR taste in the shade garden. Always think to “layer” with heights from back to front, and consider “massing” smaller border plants. A group of 3 or 5 or more will always make a statement vs. one of this, one of that kind of thing.
- Create seasonal interest with textures, contrasting colors and structure. This can be accomplished in winter as well. Lots of evergreen choices, and many great PNW plants that even bloom in the winter. Berries can be attractive for winter wildlife. Barks and branching can create added interest in “dormant” time as well. The winter does have to be a boring time in your shade garden – add some winter interest!

SHADE GARDENING – BROKEN INTO FOUR REGIONS

1. **Light Shade** – 4-6 hours of sunlight a day. Examples - numerous plants like Witch Hazel, Hydrangeas, Kalmia, Magnolias, Pieris, Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Epimediums, Hellebores, some Japanese Maples, Hardy Fuchsias of all kinds.
2. **Open Shade** – Fully exposed areas to the sky but blocked by building – no canopy/ tree overhanging. Examples - lots of plants listed above plus more shade loving Japanese Maples, Hostas of all kinds, almost any plant with bright yellow foliage.

3. **Dappled Shade** – the “woodland garden” – gardening under established trees including large conifers. Only 2-3 hours of filtered sun through trees. Examples – use lots of above plants plus Dogwoods, more Japanese Maples, Ferns, Bleeding Hearts and numerous “woodland” perennials.
4. **Deep Shade** – Areas under thick canopy that never receive much sun during day and minimal light for that matter. Place to look for foliage and not as much flowers. Few examples – utilize Ferns, Sarcococca, Osmanthus, Fatsia, Beesia, Wild Gingers, Oregon Grape and many others.

Possible plants for your shade garden. Here are some of my favorites...

Lotsa Hosta: Too many great flavors to list but look at the bold blue foliage, variegated ones (yellow and/or white), and the different scales of the plants. Big in back, smaller dwarfs along borders. Easy and drought tolerant in shade once established as well.

Shrubs: Skimmia, Leucothoe, Daphne odora, Sarcococcas (low and tall), Camellias (winter and spring bloomers), Aucuba, Fatsia (including great variegated selections like Spider Web and Camouflage), Hardy Schefflera, Native Mahonias (Oregon Grape), Hybrid Mahonias (like Charity, Soft Caress and Winter Sun), some Rhododendrons (including “Yak” varieties with great foliage), some Azaleas (note Silver Sword - a great variegated leaf variety), Big Leaf/Mop Head Hydrangeas for all summer flower power.

Japanese Maples: Lots to choose from but try anything variegated like “Radiant”, any of the Ghost Series, and many others. Look at golden full moon maple if you like yellow foliage and great fall color for larger grower. These maples are great in shady containers as well.

Perennials: Lots of Ferns (evergreen and perennial ones both), Cimicifuga (Actaea), Bleeding Hearts (especially golden), Spiderworts, Astilbes, Ligularia (Especially new dwarf one “Pandora”), Primroses, Cordyalis, Rodgersia, Hellebores of all kinds, Variegated Solomons Seal, Anemones, Lady’s Mantle, Heucheras and Heucherellas, Hardy Fuchsias, Astrantias, Saxifrages, Foxgloves, Mukdenia, Bergenia, Mukgenia, Goat’s Beard, Meadow Rue And way to many more to list of course☺

Shady Vines: Climbing Hydrangeas (including variegated one called “Miranda”), Holobelia vines, Evergreen Clematis, Japanese Climbing Hydrangea including variegated ones, Boston Ivies, Evergreen Climbing Hydrangeas (hard to come by though), Akebia.

Grasses: Northern Sea Oats, Japanese Forest Grass, Sedges, Mondo Grass, Liriope.

Groundcovers: Ajuga (lots of foliage options), Bunchberry, Sweet Woodruff, Ogon Sedum, Vinca, Wild Ginger, Wintergreen, Salal, others as well.

Conifers: Hemlocks, Cephalotaxus (Japanese Plum Yew), Golden Korean Fir, Golden Nordmann Fir, numerous Yews (low and upright), other variegated or golden conifers as well.