

FLOWERS FOR SHADY AREAS

Shady spots are often problem areas in the landscape. Some shady spots are dry because they are under trees or overhangs. Tree roots will also consume what water is available. Adding organic matter to soils in dry shady areas will help to increase the moisture holding capacity of the soil.

Since lack of nutrients may also be problem under trees, fertilize with a complete fertilizer such as a 5-10-10 or a 5-5-5. Apply a light application every month or so up to and including August, being careful not to get any dry fertilizer on the plant foliage.

Most plants growing in shade will not grow as vigorously as they would in full sun, so planting them closer together can achieve a more attractive display. However, it's important to avoid excessive overcrowding which will reduce air circulation and increase the risk of disease. Pruning nearby shrubs and trees can help improve air circulation.

Few plants will grow in dense shade. However, many plants will grow in light shade where they receive a few hours of sunlight a day. A professional arborist can prune up to 25% out of large trees to allow more air, water, and light to reach the ground.

Annual flowers that will grow in shade include impatiens, begonias, coleus, ageratum, balsam, and forget-me-nots. Those that tolerate light shade are sweet alyssum, pansy and cornflower, to name a few.

Several border perennials also do well in shade. These include hostas, primroses, daylilies, ferns, astilbe, coral bells, sweet william, foxglove, columbine, and Jacob's ladder. Some perennials that will tolerate some shade are true lilies, shasta daisies, coreopsis, and gaillardia.

Be careful not to plant flowers near black walnut trees. They produce a substance called juglone that is toxic to annuals and perennials, as well as many wood ornamentals.

Master Gardener Training Manual, *Annuals and Perennials, Shade Challenges*, P, 14 and 61.

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