

Shade gardening

shade

- Shade can vary in intensity and is rarely defined, however Shade can be defined as “a kind of light and is of many types. **Shade gardens** are planted and grown in areas with little or no direct sunlight
- Shade gardens may occur naturally or by design under [trees](#), as well as on the side of buildings or fences

- only certain plants are able to grow in shady conditions and otherwise there is direct competition for sunlight

Shades may be of,

- 'light shade', when it is open to the sky but with no direct sunlight;
- 'semi-shade', where it receives three to six hours of direct sun in mid-summer;
- 'dappled shade', with diffused light from deciduous trees;
- 'moderate shade' with two to three hours of midsummer sunlight;
- 'deep shade', under a dense evergreen tree canopy with less than two hours of sun.

Types of shade

1. Part shade:

- Also called semi- or half-shade, part shade is an area which alternates between full sun and full shade.
- The area is shaded during midday and afternoon and is open and sunnier during the cooler, morning hours.

2. Light shade:

Also called dappled or moving shade, light shade lies between part shade and full shade. Here, the sun never seems far away and is not so much blocked as filtered, typically by the translucent screen of deciduous trees. Black locust with its small, feathery leaves is typical of those trees providing light shade.

3. Full shade:

Full shade suggests a garden that is nearly always in substantial shade during the growing season. A full-shade garden reaps another benefit as well, which is moisture-retentive soil during dry spells

Site & flower selection

- Selecting plants which are compatible with the light available in your garden is the most important factor to shade-gardening success
- Select shade-loving plants with compact root systems so they don't compete with the tree for nutrients, and pay attention to watering and fertilising as plants establish.
- Add in plenty of organic matter before planting, and mulch to help the soil retain some moisture

Right plant, right place

Plants need sunlight to manufacture the sugars for energy and for making their organic molecules, so shade lowers these and reduces growth, unless plants are adapted to those conditions. Plants that are not suited to a shady garden grow long, lanky stems as they try to reach for some extra sunlight, so avoid these.

Bed preparation

If we have deep-rooted trees under which to plant, the bed preparation steps are similar to those used in sun gardening. Mark off the area to plant.

- Till to a depth of 6 to 8 inches and remove any stones, roots or debris from the soil
- Spread the appropriate amount of fertilizer or soil amendment recommended on the soil surface, along with 3 to 5 inches of organic matter, which can include composted leaves, grass clippings, peat moss, garden waste
- If you have shallow-rooted trees, the use of raised beds will remedy the problem

Proper planting practices

- Proper spacing of plants prevents competition for available light and water and allows the plants to mature and fill in the garden at a rapid pace
- Plants spaced too far apart look sparse, and weeding chores are increased.
- If planted too closely, plants are more likely to develop diseases as a result of reduced air circulation

- The general rule of spacing plants is to plant them in spacing equal to their mature height (i.e., 6-8" height = 6-8" spacing)
- Pinching those plants that are blooming heavily at time of planting will decrease transplanting stress, as well as encourage them to branch and produce more flowers as they mature.

Use of mulch

- Even in the shade, mulch has advantages.
- Mulching serves many purposes, but the major uses in shade gardening are to control weed growth and conserve soil moisture. It also serves as a contrasting background to unify and define plantings.
- Compost, pine and hardwood are all suitable mulches. Whatever choice of mulch, it should be applied 2-3 inches deep for full benefits

Water

- Under established trees there is much competition for available water between tree and flower roots While this is not a problem under shade caused by buildings, fences or walls
- take care to ensure adequate water availability under overhangs and in other areas where natural rainfall may be insufficient.
- Water the bed as needed by sub-irrigation — soaker hoses or tubes and emitters placed on or under the soil line

Top 10 Annuals for Shade

Ageratum	Part
Begonia	Full
Impatiens	Full
Caladium	Full
Coleus	Full
Petunia	Part
Sweet Alyssum	Part
Salvia/Scarlet Sage	Part
Periwinkle	Part
Dahlia	Part

Top 10 Perennials for Shade

Daylily	Part
Fern	Full
Hosta	Full
Coral Bells	Part
Columbine	Part
Foam Flower	Full
American Alum Root	Part
Lobelia	Part
Rudbeckia/Coneflower	Light
Lady's Mantle	Part

Annuals Suitable for Shade Gardening

Scientific/Common Name	Average Height	Maximum Shade Tolerance
Ageratum houstonianum/Ageratum	6-18"	Part
Lunaria annua/Honesty	36"	Part
Matthiola incana/Common stock	24-30"	Part
Matricaria recutita/German camomile	24"	Part
Mimulus cupreus/Chilean monkey-flower	8"	Light
Myosotis sylvatica/Woodland forget-me-not	9-24"	Light
Nicotiana alata/Winged tobacco	12-36"	Part
Nicotiana glauca/Flowering tobacco	36"	Part
Nierembergia hippomanica v violacea/Blue cupflower	6-9"	Part
Nigella damascena/Love-in-a-mist	12-18"	Part
Pennisetum setaceum/Annual fountain grass	36"	Part
Pentas lanceolata/Star cluster	18"	Part
Petunia x hybrida/Garden petunia	6-12"	Part
Phlox drummondii/Annual phlox	6-8"	Part

Annuals Suitable for Shade Gardening

Scientific/Common Name	Average Height	Maximum Shade Tolerance
<i>Polygonum capitatum</i> /Pinkhead	3"	Part
<i>Reseda odorata</i> /Mignonette	6"	Part
<i>Rudbeckia bicolor</i> /☐imbleflower	24"	Part
<i>Sagina subulata</i> /Corsican pearlwort	4"	Part
<i>Salvia splendens</i> /Scarlet sage	8-30"	Part
<i>Schizanthus pinnatus</i> /Butterfly flower	48"	Part
☐unbergia alata/Black-eyed Susan vine	36-60"	Part
<i>Torenia fournieri</i> /Blue torenia	12"	Full
<i>Viola tricolor</i> /Johnny-jump-up	6-8"	Part
<i>Viola</i> sp./Violet & Pansy	6-8"	Part





