

Gardening in the Shade

Part One: Understanding the shaded environment

Shade: What's in a name?

No universal terms: "half shade," "part shade," "full shade," "dense shade," etc.
Track the sun to count the hours. Part/half shade is 4 to 6 hours sun per day.
Just confusing: "High-" or "light-" and "seasonal shade."
Pick plants for the light, then factor in other site elements.

Beyond shade: More to consider

Woodsy loam.

Moderated environment. No drastic changes, everything on a gentler curve.

Protection from hail, frost, hard rain.

Microclimates on the edge and in the shade.

"Good" trees and "bad."

Shade gardeners can enjoy
elegant, early, evergreen
Lenten rose (*Helleborus x orientalis*)...



What makes a shady character?

Shade loving species and those who only tolerate the shade.

We're not on the prairie any more, Toto: The look of a shady garden.

Physical clues to tell you it's a shade lover.

Plant "behavior" sited for shade: Seasonal retreat,

So sum up your shady *advantages* as well as *disadvantages*

Be objective. Assess your site for amount of shade, source of shade, soil, temperature, exposure to elements, moisture, companion trees.

Part Two: Choosing and modifying a garden space in the shade

Deciding what you might change to garden this site

Know what you can change, then act on what will *most* improve your site.

Decreasing shade, enhancing moisture availability, improving soil or drainage, moderating temperature extremes and exposure, correcting for trees' impact.

Don't go overboard. How much change is too much?



...and the beautiful horizontal branching of shade-lovers such as Japanese maple.

Pruning trees and shrubs above and in the garden

Elevating trees and shrubs.

Most asked / Most important: Timing, leaf:wood ratio and physics.

Winter as the best time for pruning.

Tree and shrub removal. Why do we fight it?

The dark science: Pruning roots.

Modifying the "walls" of a shady garden

The edge effect is powerful.
Increasing light through the edge.
Reflected light: Bring it on, but watch for its hot side.
Improving air circulation.
Buying a tad more overhead protection.

Working the soil

Follow Nature's lead: Improve what's there, gently.
When you don't have the patience: Chemicals, knifing, drilling, digging
The compromise: Pocket planting.
Improving drainage.
Do all this, even raise beds, but don't harm tree roots!
Manufacturing woodsy loam. Compost or compostables and sand.
Increase water infiltration and retention. Get creative to moisten driest areas.
Planting is different under trees. Think impact, start small, be flexible in placement.

Part Three: Designing the shady garden

Adjusting your eyes to the dark, to the major design differences.

It's dark in there.
Viewers need an invitation.
Bare space must occur at ground level. Use it and backlighting to advantage.
Don't design the caretaker out of the picture.

Step by Step through a shady design.

Establish the edge.
Assess the visual impact of existing players.
Cast some star-potential plants and features.
Place the stars to advantage.
Give each star a supporting cast, more or less formal, full, and dramatic.
Maintain each player's relative importance and space. More chorus than star.
Make the player groups accomplish your objectives.
Lead the eye from star group to star group.

Selecting the plants you'll grow

Plus and minus, and best uses of: Perennials, annuals, ephemerals, shrubs, etc.
Chart your choices for success.

Obtaining plants

Many shady suppliers, local and mail order. No one has it all.
Choose with care from many in stock. Roots are paramount.
Hold bare-root plants like they're vegetables, until you can plant.
Digging plants from friends: No free lunch.
Digging from the "wild: Legal, ethical and practical aspects. Think!

Part Four: Maintaining a garden in the shade

Essential Care

Priorities: Water (and water and wa...), mulch, weed, and control pests.

Putting

When essentials are done: Fertilize, stake, prune, clean up in fall and renovate.

Shady characters

- = best in half-shade or seasonal full shade
- = as above, plus still good in full shade, too
- = as above, plus can at least tolerate seasonal dense shade
- = as above, plus can tolerate year-round dense shade

Ephemerals

One-season wonders. Come on strong during their season, grow quickly, bloom early and fade away by mid-summer to bulbs or roots.

Adonis: *Adonis amurensis*, *A. vernalis* •••

Woods anemones: *A. blanda*, *A. nemerosa*, *A. quinquefolia* ••••

Jack in the pulpit: *Arisaema candidissimum*, *A. dracontium*, *A. sikokianum*, *A. triphyllum* ••••

Painted arum: *Arum italicum* •••

Chinese ground orchid: *Bletilla striata* •

Toothwort/ *Dentaria*: *Cardamine diphylla*, *C. laciniata*, *C. heptaphylla* ••••

Spring beauty: *Claytonia virginica* ••••

Fall crocus: *Colchicum autumnale*, *C. byzantinum*, *C. speciosum* ••••

Fumitory: *Corydalis flexuosa* •

Hardy cyclamen: *C. coum*, *C. hederifolium* (*neopolitanum*) •

Squirrel corn & Dutchman's breeches: *Dicentra canadensis*, *D. cucularia* •••

Shooting stars: *Dodecatheon meadia* •

Winter aconite: *Eranthis cilicica*, *E. hyemalis* •

Trout lily: *Erythronium albidum*, *E. americanum*, *E. dens-canis*, *E. revolutum* •

Snake's head lily: *Fritillaria camschatcensis*, *F. meleagris* •

Snowdrops: *Galanthus elwesii*, *G. nivalis* ••

Bluebells: *Hyacinthoides* (*Endymion*/ *Scilla*) *hispanica*, *H. non-scripta* ••

Snowflake: *Leucojum aestivum* 'Gravetye', *L. vernum* •••

Virginia bluebells: *Mertensia sibirica* or *M. paniculata*, *M. virginica* •••

Puschkinia: *P. scilloides* •

Squill: *Scilla sibirica* ••

Perennials

Species that store starch in underground parts to fuel next year's growth.

Some live only three or four years but most shade-lovers are long lived.

Monkshood: *Aconitum Carmichaelii* •

Doll's eyes and baneberry: *Actaea pachypoda*, *A. rubra* ••••

Lady's mantle: *Alchemilla mollis*, *A. alpina*, *A. erythropoda* •

Bluestar: *Amsonia ciliata*, *A. tabernaemontana* •

Perennials (Cont'd.)

Anemone: *A. canadensis*, *A. sylvestris*, *A. x hybrida*, *A. vitifolia*, *A. virginiana* ••
Rue anemone: *Anemonella thalictroides* ••••
False anemone: *Anemonopsis macrophylla* ••
Columbine: *Aquilegia canadensis* & hybrids ••
Goatsbeard: *Aruncus aethusifolius*, *A. dioicus* •••
Aster: *A. divaricatus* •, *A. macrophyllus* ••••, *A. cordifolia* •••
Astilbe: *A. chinensis*, *A. hybrids*, *A. simplicifolia*, *A. taquetii* •
Masterwort: *Astrantia major*, *A. carniolica* •
False foxglove: *Aureola lava* •
Pig squeak: *Bergenia cordifolia*, *B. crassifolia* •••
Bigleaf forget me not: *Brunnera macrophylla* •••
Bellflowers: *Campanula americana* •, *C. lactiflora* •, *C. latifolia* •,
C. poscharskyana ••, *C. rapunculoides* •, *C. rotundifolia* •
Blue cohosh: *Caulophyllum thalictroides* •••
Turtlehead: *Chelone obliqua*, *C. glabra*, *C. lyonii* •••
Pipsissewa: *Chimaphila maculata* •••
Fairy candle: *Cimicifuga americana*, *C. racemosa*, *C. ramosa*, *C. simplex* ••••
Blue bush clematis: *Clematis heracleifolia* •••
Blue bead lily: *Clintonia andrewsiana*, *C. borealis* •••
Broad bellflower: *Codonopsis clematidea* •
Golden bleeding heart: *Corydalis lutea* ••••
Houndstongue: *Cynoglossum grande* •, *C. nervosum* •, *C. officinale* •,
C. virginianum ••
Lady's slipper: *Cypripedium calceolus*, *C. reginae* ••
Umbrella plant: *Darmera peltata* •
Blue deinanthe: *Deinranthe caerulea* •
Pinks: *Dianthus deltoides* •
Bleeding heart: *Dicentra eximia*, *D. formosana*, *D. spectabilis* •
Foxglove: *Digitalis lutea*, *D. x mertonensis* •
Umbrella leaf: *Diphylleia cymosa* •
Fairy bells: *Disporum lanuginosum*, *D. sessile* ••
Leopardsbane: *Doronicum caucasicum* •
Barrenwort: *Epimedium acuminatum*, *E. grandiflorum*, *E. x rubrum*,
E. x versicolor 'Sulphureum' •••
Perennial ageratum: *Eupatorium* (*Conoclinium*) *coelestinum* •
Joe Pye: *Eupatorium purpureum*, *E. rugosum* (*ageratoides*) •
Purple wood spurge: *Euphorbia amygdaloides* 'Rubra' •
Meadowsweet: *Filipendula hexapetala* (*vulgaris*) ••, *F. ulmaria* 'Variegata' •
Wandflower, Beetleweed: *Galax urceolata* ••
Gentian: *Gentiana asclepiadea* •
Cranesbill: *Geranium himalayense* •, *G. macrorrhizum* •, *G. maculatum* ••,
G. nodosum ••••, *G. phaeum* •, *G. platypetalum* •, *G. psilostemon* •,
G. sanguineum •
Bowman's root: *Gillenia trifoliata* •
Glaucidium palmatum •
Lenten rose: *Helleborus foetidus*, *H. niger*, *H. x orientalis* •
Hepatica: *H. acutiloba*, *H. americana* ••••

Perennials (Cont'd.)

Coral bells: *Heuchera americana*, *H. micrantha* hybrids, *H. sanguinea* hybrids •
Heucherella tiarelloides •
Hosta: *H. fortunei*, *H. montana*, *H. plantaginea*, *H. sieboldiana*, *H. undulata* ••••
Goldenseal: *Hydrastis canadensis* ••
Iris: *I. cristata*, *I. ensata* (*I. kaempferi*) •
Twinleaf: *Jeffersonia diphylla* ••••
Japanese waxbell: *Kirengeshoma palmata* ••
Vernal sweet pea: *Lathyrus vernus* •
Leopardplant: *Ligularia dentata*, *L. przewalskii*, *L. stenocephala* •
Lily: *Lilium martagon* ••, *L. michiganense*••••, *L. philadelphicum* •, *L. regale* •,
L. speciosum oriental hybrids as Stargazer, Casa Blanca •
Cardinal fl., Great blue lobelia: *Lobelia cardinalis*, *L. siphilitica*, *L. x speciosa* ••
Loosestrife: *Lysimachia ciliata* •, *L. punctata* ••
Plume poppy: *Macleaya cordata* •
Bee balm: *Monarda fistulosa* •
Forget-me-not: *Myosotis scorpioides* ••
Sundrops: *Oenothera tetragona* •
Mondo grass: *Ophiopogon japonicus*, *O. planiscapus* 'Nigrescens' •••
Peony: *Paeonia emodi* (•), *P. suffruticosa* •, *P. veitchii* (•)
Paris: *Paris japonica*, *P. podophylla* •
Phlox: *P. divaricata* •, *P. stolonifera* ••, *P. paniculata* (•)
Jacob's ladder: *Polemonium caeruleum*, *P. reptans* •
Solomon's seal: *Polygonatum biflorum*, *P. commutatum*, *P. odoratum* •••
Snakeweed: *Polygonum bistorta* / *bistortum superbum*, *P. milettii* •
Primrose: *Primula japonica*, *P. x polyantha* ••
Lungwort: *Pulmonaria angustifolia*, *P. longifolia*, *P. rubra*, *P. saccharata* ••
Fingerflower: *Rodgersia aesculifolia*, *R. pinnata*, *R. sambucifolia* •
Bloodroot: *Sanguinaria canadensis* ••
Semiaquilegia ecalcarata ••
Oconee bells: *Shortia galacifolia* ••
False Solomon's seal: *Smilacina racemosa* •••
Bluestem golden rod, other goldenrods *Solidago caesia*•• *S. hybrids* •
Wood poppy: *Stylophorum diphyllum* ••
Comfrey: *Symphytum grandiflorum* •
Fringecups: *Tellima grandiflora* •
Meadow rue: *Thalictrum aquilegifolium*, *T. flavum* 'Glaucum', *T. rochebrunianum* •
Foamflower: *Tiarella cordifolia*, *T. trifoliata*, *T. wherryi* •••
Tovara virginiana •••
Toadlily: *Tricyrtis formosana*, *T. hirta*, *T. macropoda* ••
Trillium: *T. catesbaei*, *T. chloropetalum*, *T. erectum*, *T. grandiflorum*, *T. sessile* •••
Merrybells: *Uvularia grandiflora*, *U. sessilifolia* ••
False hellebore: *Veratrum viride* •

Biennials

Produce flowers, set seed and die in their second year. For big, early color in a garden (from second-year plants).

Foxglove: *Digitalis purpurea* •

Money plant: *Lunaria annua* •

Forget-me-not: *Myosotis arvensis*, *M. sylvatica* ••

Annuals

Begonia spp. •

Caladium ••

Annual vinca/periwinkle: *Catharanthus roseus* •

Impatiens: *I. capensis*, *I. glandulifera*, *I. sultani* •

Edging lobelia: *L. erinus* •

Wishbone flower: *Torenia* •

Pansy: *Viola x wittrockiana* •

Tropicals (Banana) ••

Groundcovers

Form relatively solid colonies that shade the soil, preventing the growth of other species on that spot. Generally, but not always, low growing.

Bishop's weed: *Aegopodium podagraria variegatum* •••

Ajuga: *A. genevensis*, *A. pyramidalis*, *A. reptans* •

Rock cress: *Arabis albida (caucasica)* •

Ginger: *Asarum canadensis*, *A. europaeum*, *A. shuttleworthii* ••

Snow in summer: *Cerastium tomentosum* •

Plumbago: *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides* •

Golden star: *Chrysogonum virginicum* ••

Sweet fern: *Comptonia peregrina* •

Lily of the valley: *Convallaria majalis* ••

Bunchberry: *Cornus canadensis* •••

Spurge: *Euphorbia amygdaloides robbiae* •

Sweet woodruff: *Galium odoratum* ••

Wintergreen: *Gaultheria procumbens* •••

English ivy: *Hedera helix* •••

Sheep laurel: *Kalmia angustifolia* •

Yellow archangel: *Lamium galeobdolon* •

Deadnettle lamium: *Lamium maculatum* ••

Lilyturf: *Liriope muscari* ••

American skunk cabbage: *Lysichiton americanum* •

Partridgeberry: *Mitchella repens* •••

Navelwort: *Omphalodes cappadocica*, *O. verna* •

Pachysandra procumbens, *P. terminalis* ••

Mayapple: *Podophyllum peltatum* •••

Skunk cabbage: *Symplocarpus foetidus* •••

Myrtle: *Vinca major*, *V. minor* ••

Violet: *Viola cucullata* ••

Yellow root: *Xanthorhiza simplicissima* •

Grasses and Grass-like plants

- Sedge: *Carex* species ••
- Sea oats: *Chasmanthium latifolium* •
- Golden satin grass: *Hakonechloa macra aureolata* •
- Golden millet: *Milium effusum aureum* ••

Ferns

- Perennials grown not for flower but for lacy, divided foliage.
- Maidenhairfern: *Adiantum pedatum* ••
- Lady- and painted fern: *Athyrium filix-femina*, *A. goeringianum* 'Pictum' •••
- Male- and leatherwood fern: *Dryopteris filix-mas*, *D. marginalis* ••••
- Ostrich fern: *Matteucia struthiopteris* ••
- Cinnamon- and royal fern: *Osmunda cinnamomea*, *O. regalis* •••
- Christmas fern: *Polystichum acrostichoides*, *P. munitum* ••••

Vines

- Woody perennials that do not have a form of their own but cling to and follow the forms of other, sturdier plants. All should be considered half-sun species and expected to climb or scramble toward the light, even if they seem to be doing well in deeper shade.
- Hardy kiwi vine: *Actinidia kolomikta*
- Chocolate vine: *Akebia quinata*
- Porcelain vine: *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*
- Bittersweet: *Celastrus scandens*
- Clematis: *Clematis texensis*, *C. virginiana*, *C. viticella*
- Wintercreeper: *Euonymus fortunei* •••
- Climbing hydrangea: *H. anomala petiolaris* ••
- Honeysuckle: *Lonicera sempervirens*, *L. x brownii* •
- Virginia creeper: *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* ••

Shrubs

- Bottlebrush buckeye: *Aesculus parviflora* •
- Boxwood: *Buxus sempervirens* •
- Sweetshrub: *Calycanthus floricus* •
- Falsecypress: *Chamaecyparis obtusa* •
- Summersweet: *Clethra acuminata*, *C. alnifolia* •
- Dogwood: *Cornus racemosa* ••
- Winterhazel: *Corylopsis pauciflora* ••
- Bush honeysuckle: *Diervilla lonicera*, *D. sessilifolia* •
- Leatherwood: *Dirca palustris* •
- Wahoo: *Euonymus americanus* •
- Fothergilla: *F. gardenii* •
- Spring witchhazel: *Hamamelis vernalis*, *H. x intermedia* ••
- Seven son shrub: *Heptacodium micinoides* •
- Hydrangea: *H. arborescens*, *H. paniculata*, *H. quercifolia* ••
- Inkberry: *Ilex glabra* •
- Virginia sweetspire: *Itea virginica* •

Shrubs (Cont'd.)

- Mountain laurel: *Kalmia latifolia* •
- Japanese kerria: *Kerria japonica* •
- Spicebush: *Lindera benzoin*, *L. obtusifolia* ••
- Honeysuckle: *Lonicera fragrantissima* ••
- Grapeholly: *Mahonia aquifolium* •••
- (Japanese) andromeda: *Pieris floribunda*, *P. japonica* •
- Rhododendron: *R.* 'Northern Lights' 'Exbury' and 'Knapp Hill' deciduous hybrids, *R. carolinianum* and hybrids (incl. PJM), *R. catawbiense*, *R. nudiflorum* •
- Jetbead: *Rhodotypos scandens* ••
- Thimbleberry: *Rubus odoratus* ••
- Elderberry: *Sambucus canadensis* •, *S. nigra* •, *S. pubens* •••
- Ural false spirea: *Sorbaria sorbifolia* ••
- Mountain stewartia: *S. ovata* •
- Snowberry: *Symphoricarpos albus* •
- Yew: *Taxus canadensis*, *T. x media* •••
- Hemlock: *Tsuga canadensis* •
- Blueberry: *Vaccinium corymbosum* •
- Viburnum: *V. acerifolium* ••, *V. alnifolium* •, *V. trilobum* •, *V. x Burkwoodii* ••, *V. x rhytidophylloides* ••, *V. sargentii* •
- Zenobia pulverulenta*

Small trees

- Paperbark maple: *Acer griseum* ••
- Japanese maples: *Acer japonicum*, *A. palmatum*, *A. pseudosieboldianum*, *A. shirasawanum*, *A. sieboldianum* ••
- Moosewood: *Acer pensylvanicum* ••
- Threeflower maple: *Acer triflorum* •
- Blue beech: *Carpinus caroliniana* •••
- Redbud: *Cercis canadensis*, *C. chinensis* •
- Fringetree: *Chionanathus virginicus*, *C. retusus* •
- Dogwood: *Cornus alternifolia* ••, *C. controversa* ••, *C. florida* ••, *C. kousa* •, *C. mas* •, *C. officinalis* •
- Beech: *Fagus sylvatica*, *F. grandifolia* •••
- Snowbell: *Halesia diptera*, *H. tetraptera* (carolina) ••
- Witchhazel: *Hamamelis virginiana* ••
- Magnolia: *M. acuminata*, *M. virginiana*, *M. x soulangiana* ••
- Sourwood: *Oxydendrum arboreum* •
- Stewartia: *S. monadelphica*, *S. pseudocamellia*, *S. sinensis* •

More help for selecting plants in:

An Encyclopedia of Shade Perennials, W. George Schmid. Timber Press
www.clematis.com

Following pages 9 - 17: shade perennials, shrubs, small trees in chart format

Perennials for Shady Wet Sites

2-4 hours direct sun each day (full sun in spring)

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
<i>Acorus calamus</i> (sweet flag)	2-3'	tiny	July	fragrant leaf
<i>Ajuga reptans</i> (bugle, ajuga)	6-10"	blue, pink	May	
<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i> (columbine)	2-4'	many	June	
<i>Arisaema species</i> (jack in pulpit)	6-24"	tiny	June	
<i>Astilbe species</i> (false goats beard)	12-36"	white, pinks	June, July, Aug.	
<i>Carex species</i> (____ sedge)	1-2'			some variegated
<i>Chelone obliqua</i> (turtlehead)	2-3'	pink, white	July-August	
<i>Cimicifuga species</i>				
<i>C. racemosa</i> (bugbane)	3-5'	white	June	
<i>C. simplex</i> (autumn bugbane)	3-4'	white	August-Sept	
<i>Cypripedium calceolus</i> (yellow lady's slipper)	10"	yellow	June	protected
<i>Erythronium spp.</i> (trout lily)	6"	yellow	April-May	summer dormancy
Ferns: <i>Osmunda species</i>				
Ostrich fern	2-4'			invasive
Royal fern	3-4'+			
Interrupted fern	1-2'			acid
<i>Hosta species</i>	12-36"	lilac	July	
<i>H. sieboldiana</i> , <i>H. glauca</i> , <i>H. undulata</i>				
<i>Lilium canadense</i> (wild lily)	3-4'	orange	July	
<i>Lobelia species</i>	18-36"	red, blue	July, August	
(<i>L. cardinalis</i> : cardinal flower; <i>L. siphilitica</i> , Great blue lobelia)				
<i>Monarda species</i> (bee balm)	2-3'	red, pinks	June-July	
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i> (creeping forget-me-not)	3-6"	lt. blue	June-July	
<i>Rodgersia species</i> (rodgersia)	2-3'	white, pinks	June-July	
<i>R. aesculifolia</i> , <i>R. pinnata</i>				
<i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i> (skunk cabbage)	12-18"			
<i>Thalictrum species</i> (meadow rue)	2-6'	white, pinks	June-July	
<i>Trollius europaeus</i> (globeflower)	18-36"	yellow	May-July	

Perennials for Shady Dry Sites

Plant name	width x ht.	color:	blooms in:	notes:
sand				most all of these want LOAM not
Actaea rubra (red baneberry)	18-30" 18-30"	white fl red berry	late May-June July-August	
Alchemilla mollis, alpina (ladies mantle, dwarf l. m., alpine l. m.)	1' x 18" 1' x 1'	chartreuse	May & June	heat OK
Anemone, woodland spp. <i>A. canadensis, A. sylvestris</i>	18 x 18"	white	May-June	aggressive runners
Aster macrophylla (bigleaf aster)	1' x 2'	white	August	
Campanula rotundifolia (harebell)	1' x 18"	violet	June	
Cerastium tomentosum (snow in summer)	2' x 8"	white	June	also in sun grey evergreen
Chasmanthium latifolium (northern sea oats)			see Sun plants for this and others that cross to part shade	
Colchicum autumnale (fall crocus, colchicum)	1' x 1'	pink, white lavender	October	foliage in spring, dies back
Digitalis spp. (foxglove) <i>D. ambigua, D. grandiflora</i>	18" x 4'	yellow, white lavender	June	short-lived perennial and biennial
Epimedium species (bishop's hat, mitrewort)	6-12" x 6-12"	pink, white lavender	May	watch for new, taller species semi-evergreen
Euphorbia myrsinites, other spp. (myrtle euphorbia)	8" x 2'	chartreuse blue evergreen	May	heat OK
Gaultheria procumbens (wintergreen)	12" x 6"	white	May	best in acid soil semi-evergreen
Hepatica species (hepatica, liverwort)	6" x 6"	pink, white violet-blue	May	evergreen
Jeffersonia diphylla (twinleaf)	1' x 1'	white	May	
Pedicularis canadensis (wood betony)	6-12" x 12-18"	mauve	May	
Pulmonaria saccharata (Bethlehem sage, lungwort)	12-18" x 18-24"	blue/pink	May	heat OK
Smilacina racemosa (starry false Solomon's seal)	1' x 2-3'	white	May	also in sun spreads as groundcover
Solidago caesia (bluestem goldenrod)	1' x 3-4'	yellow	August	
Symphytum grandiflorum (large-flowered comfrey)	18-12"	pale yellow	May	heat OK
Viola pedata (birdsfoot violet)	5" x 5"	violet	June	also in sun
Waldestinia ternata (barrenstrawberry)	4" tall	cream	May	aggressive spreader; fruit (inedible) can be attractive late summer

Perennials for Very Shady Gardens

Under deciduous trees. Spring sun then 0-2 hours direct sun:

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
Actaea species (Baneberry) A. pachypoda (white), A. rubra	18-24"	white, red	June	shrubby
Ajuga reptans (bugle, ajuga)	6-10"	blue, pink	May	little/no flower in 0-2 hours sun; use green, or type with white variegation
Anemone, spring species A. canadensis (white - 18"), A. blanda (4")	4-18"	blue, white, pink	May	cheerful spreaders
Anemone, late species A. japonica, A. hybrida	18-36"	pink, white,	August-Sept	colonizes
Arisaema species (Jack-in-the-pulpit, many species & varieties)	12-24"	green	May-June	larger each year; moist soils
Aruncus species (goatsbeard) A. dioicus (4'), A. aethusifolius (12")	1 - 4'	white	June	slow to attain full size in deep shade but worth the wait
Asarum species (Ginger) A. canadense, A. europaeum (evergreen)	4-8"	maroon	May-June	good groundcover; A. canadense fast spreader; both colonize
Bergenia species (pigsqueak)	18"	rose	May	colonizes; evergreen
Campanula species (bellflower) esp. C. poscharskyana, others worth a try	6-18"	violet	July	some fast spreaders
Caulophyllum thalictroides (blue cohosh)	18"	green-white	May-June	
Chelone species (turtlehead)	18-24"	rose, white	July-August	slow; moist
Cimicifuga species (bugbane) C. racemosa (late spring), C. racemosa July-Aug. and bronze foliage types, C. simplex (fall)	24-60"	white	June, July or Sept	flowers malodorous
Claytonia virginica (spring beauty)	4"	white-pink	April	summer dormancy; moist soil
Cornus canadensis (bunchberry)	4"	white	May-June	acid soil, moist; evergreen
Corydalis lutea (golden bleeding heart)	12"	yellow	June-August	moist soils, spreads
Dicentra species D. cucullaria, D. eximia, D. canadensis Squirrel corn, fringed bleeding heart, Dutchman's breeches	8-18"	white, pink	May not for dry areas	1 & 3 have summer dormancy
Dentaria diphylla (toothwort) also D. laciniata (cutleaf toothwort)	12"	white	June	bright white; summer dormancy colonizes
Epimedium species (bishops hat)	12"	yellow, white red, pink	June-July	can handle dry shade
Eranthis hyemalis (Winter aconite)	4-6"	yellow	Mar-April	summer dormancy; ivy or vinca above it is best; seed or from summer transplants best
Erythronium canadensis (dogtooth violet, trout lily)	6"	yellow	April-May	short bloom period; summer dormancy; colonizes; moist woods
Ferns Adiantum pedatum (maidenhair) Osmunda species (cinnamon, ostrich) Polystichum acrostichoides (Xmas)	8-12" 36-48" 18"			lacy, very dark moist areas and dry evergreen; moist areas
Galanthus nivalis (snowdrop)	4-9"	white	Mar-April transplants best;	summer dormancy; summer moist well-drained
Geranium species (cranesbill) esp. native G. maculatum	12-36"	violets	June-July	
Helleborus species (Christmas/Lenten rose)	12"	white, pink	April	evergreen; no wind or sun in winter

Perennials for Very Shady Gardens (Cont'd.)

Under deciduous trees. Spring sun then 0-2 hours direct sun:

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
<i>Hepatica triloba</i> (Hepatica) also <i>H. americana</i>	4-6"	white, pink violet	May	evergreen; moist soils; flower color affected by soil pH
<i>Hosta</i> species & varieties	4-36"	violet, white	July-August	
<i>Houttynia quadricolor</i>	12"	none		multi-color leaf; spreads terribly
<i>Lamium maculatum</i> (lamium)	12"	white, pink	June, repeats	spreads; variegated types nice
<i>Leucojum</i> species (snowflake)	12-24"	white	April-May	
<i>Ligularia</i> species (leopard plant, golden groundsel) <i>L. przewalskii</i> spikes, <i>L. stenocephala</i> daisy-like	3-4'	yellow	June-July	great, large leaves melt in heat needs constant moisture
<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> (Cardinal flower)	36"	red	July	moist soils & midday sun best)
<i>Lysimachia nummularia aurea</i> (golden coins)	4"	yellow	June	spreads; moist soil
<i>Maianthemum canadense</i> (wild lily of the valley, Canada Mayflower)	6"	white	May-June	moist acid soils; dense colonies
<i>Mertensia virginica</i> (VA bluebells)	18"	blue	May-June	summer dormancy; colonizes
<i>Mitchella repens</i> (partridgeberry)	2"	white-pink	May-June	moist soils; evergreen; acid pH
<i>Myosotis biennis</i> (forget me not)	8-12"	blue, pink	June	biennial, allow to seed
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i> (creeping forget me not)	4-6"	blue	June-August	true perennial; fast in moist soils
<i>Pachysandra terminalis</i> (pachysandra)	6-10"	tiny	May	evergreen
<i>Phlox stolonifera</i> (woodland phlox)	6"	blue, violet	May-June	good groundcover
<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i> (Mayapple)	12"	white	May	summer dormancy; colonizes
<i>Polygonatum</i> species Solomon's Seal: <i>P. biflorum</i> , <i>P. commutatum</i>	12"-6'	white	June	moist soils; good fall color; slow to spread; variegated type pretty
<i>Pulmonaria</i> species (lungwort) <i>P. saccharata</i> , <i>P. angustifolia</i>	12-18"	blue, pink	May	variegated types nice; slow
<i>Rodgersia</i> species	2-3'	white	June	fantastic foliage; needs moisture
<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	6"	white	April-May	short bloom period; colonizes
<i>Smilacina racemosa</i> Starry or False Solomon's Seal	18-36"	white	June	moist soils best but good in dry
<i>Stylophorum diphyllum</i> (Celandine poppy)	18"	yellow	June	<i>Chelidonium majus</i> shares common name, is less showy and weedier
<i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i> (skunk cabbage)	12-18"	none	March-April	moist & wet soils; lush colonies as groundcover; summer dormancy
<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i> (foamflower)	10"	white	May-June	fast spreader in moist soils; nearly evergreen
<i>Tricyrtis hirta</i> (toad lily)	18-24"	violet	Sept-October	
<i>Trillium</i> species & varieties	12"	white, red yellow	May-June	summer dormancy; moist slopes
<i>Uvularia grandiflora</i> (bellwort)	18"	yellow-green	May-June	spreads slow & neat; rich, moist soil
<i>Vinca minor</i> (myrtle)	3-8"	violet, white	May	evergreen
<i>Viola</i> species (violets, all kinds)	3-8"	many	May	spreader by seed; dry & wet soils

Perennials for Terribly Shady Gardens

Under evergreens, 0-2 hours direct sun:

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i> (Bishop's weed)	12"	white	May-June	invasive
<i>Ajuga reptans</i> (bugle, ajuga)	6-10"	blue, pink	May	little/no flower in 0-2 hours sun; use green, or type with white variegation
<i>Sedum acre</i> (goldcarpet sedum)	3-6"	yellow	June	little/no flower in 0-2 hours sun
<i>Smilacina racemosa</i> (false Solomon's seal)	24"	white	May-June	little/no flower in 0-2 hours sun
<i>Vinca minor</i> (myrtle)	3-8"	violet, white	May	evergreen

Plants from 0-2, under deciduous, if steady water is supplied: *Asarum*, *Cornus canadensis*, *Epimedium*, ferns, *lamium*, *pachysandra*, *tiarella*, *viola*

Annual Plants for Shady Gardens

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
<i>Begonia species</i>	6-12"	white, red	May-October	moist
<i>Caladium</i>	6 - 12"	none		colorful leaf
<i>Catharanthus rosea</i> (old maid)	6-12"	white, pink	May-October	
<i>Coleus hybrids</i> (<i>Coleus</i>)	12-24"	none		colorful leaf
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i> (elephant ear)	3-8'	none		huge green leaf
<i>Impatiens wallerana</i> (<i>Impatiens</i>)	6-36"	many	May-October	
<i>Mimulus hybrids</i> (monkey flower)	12"	many	May-October	4 hours sun
<i>Torenia fournieri</i> (wishbone flower)	12"	combo	May-October	4 hours sun

Vines for Shady Gardens

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
<i>Akebia quinata</i> (chocolate vine)	+20'	must see it	May	
<i>Ampelopsis brevipedunculata</i> (porcelain vine)	+15'	tiny	berries notable	grows in shade, needs sun for berry development
<i>Celastrus scandens</i> (bittersweet)	+15'	tiny		invasive; pretty in fall
<i>Clematis species</i> (virgin's bower) <i>C. hybrids</i> , <i>C. paniculata</i> , many others	8-30'	many	June & later	roots like shade, flowers like sun
<i>Echinocystis lobata</i> (wild cucumber)	20'	white	August	collect seed; blooms in 2 hours sun
<i>Euonymus fortunei</i> varieties <i>E. f. Emerald Gaiety</i> , <i>E. f. Kewensis</i> , "wintercreeper", many others	18"-20'	tiny		evergreen; many variegations
<i>Hedera helix</i> (English ivy)	2-30'			evergreen; fast; many variegations
<i>Hydrangea a. petiolaris</i>	20'	white	May-June	climbing hydrangea 2-8 hours sun
<i>Lonicera x Heckrottii</i> (honeysuckle)	+10'	yellow	June-August	red in bud; fast
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> (Virginia creeper)	+20'			fast; good fall color
<i>Polygonum aubertii</i> (silver fleece)	20'	white	August	fast

Shrubs for Shady Gardens

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
Chamaecyparis varieties (false cypress)	3-10'			no wind; 4 hours sun; evergreen
Clethra alnifolia (summersweet)	4-5'	white, pink	July	4 hours sun
Corylopsis glabrescens (fragrant winterhazel)	8'	yellow	April-May	2-8 hours sun
Fothergilla gardenii (Dwarf F.)	4-5'	white	May	acid; 4 hours sun; good fall color
Hamamelis species (witchhazel) H. virginiana (American W.), H. mollis (Chinese W.), H. vernalis (Spring W.)	8-18'	yellow	April or September	arching habit
Hydrangea species (snowball) H. arborescens (common hydrangea) H. quercifolia (oakleaf H.) H. paniculata (peegee H.)	3-4" 5-8' 4-20'	white white-pink white	July-August July-August August	all hydrangeas need moist soil at least 4 hours sun 4 hours sun pyramidal flower clusters; 4 hours
Ilex x meserveae (Holly Blue Pri.)	3-8'	yellow	May	acid; 4 hours sun; no wind
Kerria japonica (Japanese kerria)	4-8'	yellow	May, repeats	2-8 hours sun
Leucothoe fontanesia (drooping leucothoe)	3-5'	white-pink	May-June	acid; no wind; 4 hours sun
Lindera benzoin (spicebush)	8'	tiny	berries notable	moist to wet; 2-6 hours sun
Mahonia aquifolium (Grape holly)	4-8'	yellow	May	little wind; moist; 4 hours sun
Pieris japonica (Andromeda)	4-8'	white, red	May	acid; no wind; 4 hours sun
Rhododendron species	2-9'	many	May-June	acid soil; no wind; 4 hours sun best
Ribes odoratum (clove currant)	8'	yellow	May	4 hours sun
Symphoricarpos albus (snowberry)	4-8'	pink	May-June	2-8 hours sun; fruit persists
Taxus varieties (yew) T. densiforma, T. media Wardii, T. baccata	3-30'			2-8 hours sun; evergreen
Tsuga canadensis (hemlock)	2-50'			moist; no wind; 4 hours sun
Viburnum species	3-20'	white, pink	May-June	4-8 hours sun

Small Trees for Shady Gardens

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
Amelanchier species (serviceberry)	6-15'	white	April-May	fringe areas
Cercis canadensis (redbud)	10-20'	pink	May	fringe areas
Cornus species (dogwoods) C. florida (traditional flowering D.) C. kousa (Kousa dogwood) C. mas (Cornelian cherry)	6-20' 10-20' 15-30' 10-20'	 white, pink white yellow	 May-June June May	 fringe areas; no wind 4 hours sun 4 hours sun

Others: Chionanthus virginicus (fringetree); Halesia spp. (silverbell); Oxydendrum arboreum (sourwood); Fagus spp. (beech); Acer palmatum (Japanese maples)

Consider using shrubs as trees, rather than trees since even the smallest trees are often too large

Perennials for Partly Shady Gardens

Open shade or woodland fringe. At least 4 hours direct sun:

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
Actaea species (Baneberry) A. pachypoda (white), A. rubra	18-24"	white, red	June	shrubby
Ajuga reptans (bugle, ajuga)	6-10"	blue, pink	May	can make transition from sun to shade smoothly; flowering drops off
Alchemilla species (lady's mantle)	12" 18" in bloom	yellow	June	seed pods also chartreuse, pretty through July; spreads by seed
Anemone, spring species A. canadensis (white - 18"), A. blanda (4")	4-18"	blue, white, pink	May	cheerful spreaders
Anemone, late species A. japonica, A. hybrida	18-36"	pink, white,	August-Sept	colonizes
Angelica archangelica	3-8'	green-white,	June-July	biennial, allow to seed
Aquilegia species (columbine)	6-36"	many	June	allow to seed
Aruncus species (goatsbeard) A. dioicus (4'), A. aethusifolius (12")	1 - 4'	white	June	after bloom, seed pods attractive
Asarum species (Ginger) A. canadense, A. europaeum (evergreen)	4-8"	maroon	May-June	good groundcover; A. canadense fast spreader; both colonize
Astilbe varieties (astilbe, many)	12-36"	pink, white,	varies Jun-Aug	
Baptisia australis (false indigo)	4'	blue	May-June	slow to attain full size but worth the wait; very sturdy; attractive winter seed pods and stems
Bergenia species (pigsqueak)	18"	rose	May	colonizes; evergreen
Campanula species (bellflower) C. carpatica, C. poscharskyana, C. portenschlagiana, C. persicifolia, others	6-18"	violet, white	June-July	some fast spreaders
Chelidonium majus (Celandine poppy)	18"	yellow	June	
Chelone species (turtlehead)	18-24"	rose, white	July-August	slow; moist
Chrysanthemum parthenium (feverfew)	12-18"	white	June-July	
Chrysogonum virginianum (golden star; green & gold)	6"	yellow	May-June	repeats bloom off-on thru summer; groundcover where happiest
Cimicifuga species (bugbane) C. racemosa (late spring), C. racemosa July-Aug., C. racemosa and bronze foliage types, C. simplex (fall)	24-60"	white	June, July or Sept	flowers malodorous
Clematis heracleifolia davidi (blue bush clematis)	3'	lt. blue	August	cut to ground each year; small tubular flowers very fragrant
Cornus canadensis (bunchberry)	4"	white	May-June	acid soil, moist; evergreen
Corydalis lutea (golden bleeding heart)	12"	yellow	June-August	moist soils, spreads
Cypripedium calceolus (Yellow Lady's Slipper)	8-12"	yellow	June	slowly enlarging clump; don't try pink one - needs special soil fungus
Dicentra eximia fringed bleeding heart	8-18"	white, pink	May	some repeat bloom; not dry areas
Digitalis species (foxglove)	3-6'	yellow, pinks	June-July	some biennial, all perennial species short-lived so let all seed
Doronicum caucasicum (leopardsbane)	12"	yellow	June	
Epimedium species (bishops hat)	12"	yellow, white red, pink	June-July	can handle dry shade

Perennials for Partly Shady Gardens (Cont'd.)

Open shade or woodland fringe. At least 4 hours direct sun:

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
<i>Eranthis hyemalis</i> (Winter aconite)	4-6"	yellow	Mar-April	summer dormancy; ivy or vinca above it is best; seed or from summer transplants best
<i>Filipendula</i> species (meadowsweet) <i>F. hexapetala/vulgaris</i> ; <i>F. ulmaria</i> esp. <i>variegata</i> ; <i>F. rubra</i> floppy	18"	white	June	good foliage; moist soils in shade
<i>Galanthus nivalis</i> (snowdrop)	4-9"	white	Mar-April	summer dormancy; summer transplants best; moist well-drained
<i>Galium odoratum</i> (sweet woodruff)	6"	white,	May	colonizes
<i>Geranium</i> species (cranesbill)	12-36"	violets	June-July	
Grasses, grass-like plants <i>Carex</i> species <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> (ribbon grass) <i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i> (Sea oats) bamboo <i>Fargesia nitida</i> golden satin grass <i>Hakonechloa m. aureo.</i> lilyturf (see <i>Liriope</i>)	12" 36" 18" 4-5' 18"	broad foliage easily controlled in shade gold striped		yellow variegated adds light fast; white striped slow; pretty seed heads slow but worth it
<i>Helleborus</i> species (Christmas/Lenten rose)	12"	white, pink	April	evergreen; no wind or sun in winter
<i>Hepatica triloba</i> (<i>Hepatica</i>) also <i>H. americana</i>	4-6"	white, pink violet	May	evergreen; moist soils; flower color affected by soil pH
<i>Hesperis matronalis</i> (sweet rocket)	36"	violet	May-June	spreads
<i>Heuchera</i> species (coral bells)	15-24"	red, pink	May-June	"Purple Palace" with maroon leaf
<i>Hosta</i> species & varieties	4-36"	violet, white	July-August	
<i>Iris cristata</i> (crested iris)	6-12"	violet	May-June	moist to wet soils
<i>Iris sibirica</i> (Siberian iris)	18"-30"	vio, wh, yel	May-June	dry to moist to wet soils
<i>Kirengeshoma palmata</i> Japanese wax bell	2-3'	yellow	Sept.	maple-like foliage
<i>Lamium maculatum</i> (lamium)	12"	white, pink	June, repeats	spreads; variegated types nice
<i>Ligularia</i> species (leopard plant, golden groundsel) <i>L. przewalskii</i> spikes, <i>L. stenoccephala</i> daisy-like	3-4'	yellow	June-July	great, large leaves melt in heat needs constant moisture
<i>Lilium</i> species hardy lilies: Michigan Lily, Asiatic lilies	36-60"	many, no blues	July	
<i>Liriope spicata</i> (lilyturf) esp. variegated forms	12"	violet	August	grassy, foliage semi-evergreen
<i>Lobelia</i> species <i>L. siphilitica</i> (Great Blue L.,) <i>L. cardinalis</i> (Cardinal flower -red)	18-36"	blue, red	July-August	moist soils best
<i>Lysimachia nummularia aurea</i> (golden coins)	4"	yellow	June	spreads; moist soil
<i>Macleaya cordata</i> (plume poppy)	4-8'	smoky salmon	July	great, large leaves; can spread quickly - break off shoots in May
<i>Mertensia virginica</i> (VA bluebells)	18"	blue	May-June	summer dormancy; colonizes
<i>Monarda</i> species (Bee Balm) <i>M. didyma</i> , <i>M. fistulosa</i>	18-36"	pink, red, white	June-July	fast spreader in moist soils
<i>Myosotis biennis</i> (forget me not)	8-12"	blue, pink	June	biennial, allow to seed
<i>Myosotis scorpioides</i> (creeping forget me not)	4-6"	blue	June-August	true perennial; fast in moist soils
<i>Paeonia</i> species (peony)	3-5'	many	May-June	rich soil

Perennials for Partly Shady Gardens (Cont'd.)

Open shade or woodland fringe. At least 4 hours direct sun:

Plant name	height:	color:	blooms in:	notes:
Phlox woodland species <i>P. stolonifera</i> , <i>P. divaricata</i> (12")	6-12"	blue, violet	May-June	good groundcover
Physostegia virginiana	24-36"	pink, white	August	(obedient plant)
Podophyllum peltatum (Mayapple) 12"	12"	white	May	summer dormancy; colonizes
Polygonatum species Solomon's Seal: <i>P. biflorum</i> , <i>P. commutatum</i>	12"-6'	white	June	moist soils; good fall color; slow to spread; variegated type pretty
Polygonum species knotweeds: <i>P. affine</i> 10", <i>P. bistorta</i> 'Superbum' 24", <i>P. cuspidatum</i> 'Compactum' 36"	12-36"	pink, red	July-August	can be invasive in good soil & sun
Primula species (primrose)	4-12"	all	May, repeats	moist, rich
Prunella vulgaris (self-heal)	6"	pink	June	
Pulmonaria species (lungwort) <i>P. saccharata</i> , <i>P. angustifolia</i>	12-18"	blue, pink	May	variegated types nice; slow
Rheum palmatum (decorat. rhubarb) 3-5'	3-5'	whitish	June	leaf is nice
Rodgersia species (rodgersia)	18"-3'	whitish	June-July	foliage is beautiful; moist soil
Sanguinaria canadensis (bloodroot)	6"	white	April-May	short bloom period; colonizes
Solidago caesia bluestem goldenrod) 2-3'	2-3'	yellow	July-August	fringe areas
Symplocarpus foetidus (skunk cabbage)	12-18"	none	March-April	moist & wet soils; lush colonies as groundcover; summer dormancy
Tellima grandiflora (tellima)	12"	white-pink	May-June	
Tiarella cordifolia (foamflower)	10"	white	May-June	fast spreader in moist soils; nearly evergreen
Thalictrum species (meadow rue) <i>T. aquilegifolium</i> , <i>T. rochebrunianum</i>	6-48"	white, pink	June	some have summer dormancy; tiny flowers like a cloud
Trillium species & varieties	12"	white, red	May-June	summer dormancy; moist slopes
Tricyrtis hirta (toad lily)	18-24"	violet	Sept-October	foliage can scorch in heat, sun
Uvularia grandiflora (bellwort)	18"	yellow-green	May-June	spreads slow & neat; rich, moist soil
Vinca minor (myrtle)	3-8"	violet, white	May	evergreen
Viola species (violets, all kinds)	3-8"	many	May	spreader by seed; dry & wet soils