



Making it pretty in the Shade

Many of you have mostly shade with only a few spots that get some sun during the day. Doing a study of the sun so that you know where these spots are --and what time of day they occur is very important-- so that you can target those few precious hours of sun and use them to their fullest potential --and also to make sure that you don't put plants in those spots that wouldn't like even a few hours of sun. (If you don't already know it --the right amount of sun or shade is one of the most important factors that affect the health and beauty of your plants)

This Newsletter is written to help make your shade gardens beautiful and full of bloom, interest, fragrance and joy!

A few tips to get you started thinking--

If you have deep shade under evergreen trees- it is indeed very hard to get plants to bloom or be vigorous -so lifting the trees (removing lower branches) is a great way to permanently let in enough light to at least make the area bright. Thinning trees is ok if done properly --meaning removing some limbs all the way back to an intersecting branch --but lifting is best.

Plants that have colorful foliage are always a plus-even if they don't bloom. Variegated leaves stand out in shade much better than green leaves. Evergreen plants help make the area pretty all year long. Fragrance is always nice.

Some great evergreen plants that have variegated leaves are



Variegated Pittosporum Gold Dust Acuba Spotted Leopard Plant

If you have bright shade or shade from deciduous trees (trees that lose their leaves in winter) concentrate on choosing plants that bloom in late winter or early spring-so that the buds are already set before the leaves come on the trees. Below are a few of my favorites for the Houston area. Love these colors together .



Hickley Gold Columbine Pink Wood Sorrel Divarcata Phlox Red Ruffle Azalea

Some extra feeding with one of the specialty fertilizers (in addition to the program) that add some acid to the soil Like

Espoma Holly Tone, will also make up for the lack of sun and pop out those blooms. I like to do any special feeding between the months that I am applying the granular Lady Bug on the program.

Here are some great plant choices for constant bright shade, dappled shade or early morning sun only

Small Trees with colorful leaves-



Japanese Maples- bloodgood has great reddish purple color but many will do well here. These take some extra care and need speciality feeding with organic products like Espoma Holly Tone.



Pansy Forest Redbud- large purple heart shaped leaves that follow early pink blooms in spring. More drought tolerant than Japanese maple.



Saucer Magnolia-A small deciduous magnolia with large pink spring blooms the size of saucers. Soft green leaves in Summer

Large Shrubs for shade -



Ebbingei Elaeagnus-it has all the perks for any kind of shade or sun-it's evergreen leaves are shiny and dotted with silver flecks and in the fall it produces tiny blooms that smell like vanilla and turn into olives for the birds. Best kept at 5'X5' will reach 9'



Variegated Pittosporum- Another evergreen super star with creamy vanilla edges along the thick shiny leaves. Tiny fragrant flowers. Can be kept 4'X4' but will grow larger to reach 6'. It also comes in a dwarf variety that gets about 3'X3'



Oak leaf Hydrangeas 5' tall give it at least 4' of space—it blooms white conical blooms in the spring that stay on the plants and turn from tan to coppery pink in late summer—in fall and winter the leaves turn several colors and fall off in February just before the blooms appear.



Original Endless Summer Hydrangeas .

4'X4' do great here –blooms appear all summer. It likes living on the edge of shade-dappled shade or just a few hours of Am light.



Bridal Wreath Spirea- give it 5' in the garden. White arching clusters of fragrant white flowers in spring.



Japanese Keria—

very similar to Bridal Wreath Spirea except it blooms yellow and the leaves are much larger and arrow shaped. Give it at least 4' of space.

Dwarf or Small Shrubs for shade-



Wheeler's Dwarf

Pittosporium-evergreen shiny dark green



Dwarf Variegated

Pittosporium variegated leaves with tiny fragrant flowers 3'X3' can take shade or sun.



Frost Proof Gardenia—the easiest gardenia here-- good drainage is best—very fragrant. Needs feeding of Espoma Holly Tone if it yellows at all. 3'-4'



Japanese Aralia- large evergreen leaves that add a tropical air to a shady garden- needs at least 3' of space and shelter from the north to stay evergreen.

Great In the Shade Perennials 18"-3'

Evergreen Ferns-



Holly Fern –Glossy dark green leaves 2'



Autumn Fern – new growth is orange- 2'

Heuchera-Coral Bells-come in every leaf color-can be fussy-must have excellent drainage but like a little more water than most plants-so good with Azaleas , bright shade , high feeder- but really pretty. 18"



Hostas



Big Blue Leaf Hostas do really well here — something about that blue in the leaf—the only ones I use- they take up about 3' of space

Phlox is pretty and fragrant



Bright Eyes -a long lasting paniculata phlox-2'



Hinckley or Texas Gold Columbine have yellow flowers in spring and pretty blue green leaves (note most tags say 5 hours of sun —not here- put them in shade - or a few hours of morning sun only. 2'



Lenten Rose Hellebore is evergreen unusual and gorgeous- blooms at Easter every year. It needs about 2.5' of space.



Giant Ligularia- evergreen blooms in winter-early spring. 2' tall-3' of space. Spring bloom



Red Turks Cap- attracts humming birds to the shade-very pretty mixed with Salvia Guaranitcia (Black & Blue Salvia)-give this at least 3' in the garden. Late summer- fall bloom



Salvia Guaranitcia (Black & Blue Salvia)-attracts humming birds to the shade- very pretty with Red Turks Cap. Give this at least 3' in the garden. Spring- fall bloom

Some Pretty Groundcovers for shade are--



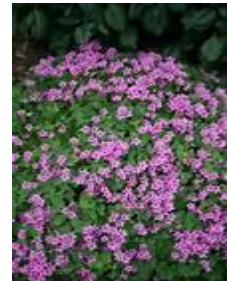
Golden
Moneywort



Purple
Shamrock



Georgia Blue
Speedwell



Pink Wood
Sorrel

Now lets' address that spot in a shady garden where it is shady most of the day but gets several hours (3-4) of either hot mid-day sun or late afternoon sun. This can be a hard spot to find a plant that will do well in---below are some that will do great-

There are a few Roses that will bloom very well –if you get at least 3 hours of some sun-anytime of day-can you believe it!!!



Dame de Coeur



Lady Banks



Vanity

Shrub rose

Climbing Rose

Climbing Rose

Help your roses bloom more by feeding them Espoma Rose Tone at the drip line each time you cut them back.

That's not all-below are some really pretty perennials that also thrive in shade most all day until the late afternoon sun hits them. Be sure that they are well drained.



Autumn Aster



Pink Skullcap



Powis Castle



Blackfoot Daisy



Katy Ruellia Gold Lantana Purple Heart Jew Salvia Farinacea

I hope that you have gotten excited about touching up your shady gardens after reading this newsletter.

Remember that the plant tags that come in pots or on pots seldom give you correct information for this area. Plant tags are only based on the national hardiness zone map which only pertains to minimum cold temperature. Our stress is heat and sometimes aridity here-so the tags are not taking our unique micro climate conditions into consideration.

Enjoy your shady gardens- **Love & Luck, Lucy Harrell**