



Digging It!

June, 2012

Shady Ladies: Shady Places

Plants that tolerate shade were originally woodland species. They adapted to shade and light, and the often acidic, humus soils of the forest. It is not surprising then that you need to reproduce some of these conditions in your garden by amending the soil with compost or sphagnum peat moss.

Prepare the soil for planting by digging at least four inches or organic matter into the soil and mix thoroughly into the top eight inches of soil. Shredded leaves can be safely applied as mulch.

Prune tree branches high to improve air circulation in shady areas. Poor air circulation coupled with low light means that foliage of plants stay wet longer thereby contributing to fungal diseases such as powdery mildew. Watering with soaker hoses or by drip irrigation is always best.

We often rely on annuals to accent our shady areas (e.g., impatiens or begonias). Light colours such as white, cream, yellow and pink will stand out more than darker colours.



Creative Common

Carefully selecting perennials for colour will help to liven up our

shady areas. Astilbe is an excellent choice for a perennial for a shady area. Tiny starry flowers produced on plumes in shades of white, pink or red. The foliage of the Astilbe is mid to dark green and begins to show in late May or early June. These clump forming perennials grow well in dappled shady, moist areas that will not dry out in summer heat. Cut flowers last well in arrangements. Three popular varieties are Astilbe ardensii "Diamant" (white), Astilbe "Europa" (pink), Astilbe x Arendsii "Fanal" (red). Other excellent choices for semi shade include Hydrangea, Bleeding Heart, Coral Bells, Hellebore.

Foliage is also fascinating in ferns whether crimped, curly or lacy, the mature fronds sway and create interesting texture and movement. Ferns traditionally found in the haunts for fairies and sprites and will give your garden an air of mystery. They survive very well in shady moist areas away from direct sun and cold winter winds and often form their own colonies. Good choices include: Ostrich Fern, seen in the Canadian woodlands in early spring; 1.7m high from a vertical crown, Painted Fern, painted in shades of green and burgundy coated with silver; 30 -48cm wide and will not spread, Maiden Hair Fern, delicate, finely divided mid to pale green; 15-30cm tall.



Creative Common

Hostas ranging from neon yellows to moody blues are famous for their foliage brightening up a dark area. Sum and Substance; bright lime green, 75cm tall and 150 cm across, Blue Angel; heart shaped blue foliage that survives deep shade, up to 1 metre across, Patriot Hosta: green leaves with white margins, an eye catching spot of colour in the shade, Venusta: miniature variety that only 5cm high with pointed green leaves.

Ground Covers are wonderful for either flat shady areas where you are trying to keep weeds down or banks that may be eroded. Periwinkle; shiny oval leaves with blue blossoms: 10-15cm high, Japanese Spurge; shiny green leaves with small white flowers, 15-30 cm high, Sweet Woodruff; bright green leaves in spring with small white flowers.) Most ground covers are invasive and must be contained.

With some good planning you can look forward to enjoying the peace and tranquility of the shade in your garden during the hot summer days to come.

*Sherry Leechman,
Master Gardener In Training*

June TO DO List

- Stake plants before they fill in (Peonies, Hydrangea)
- Apply mulch to shrub plants before they fill in
- Pinch back Artemesia, Bee Balm, Black-eyed Susans, Catmint Purple Coneflower and Shasta Daisies to encourage bushier growth
- Prune early flowering shrubs (eg. Lilac) that have finished flowering to encourage new growth for next year
- Water transplants regularly until they become established
- Weed as they appear to avoid spending more time later

Tip of the Month:

Water only in the early morning or early evening and thoroughly. Use rainbarrels or other water collection systems where possible.

Upside down plastic bottles with the bottoms removed will provide water for specific plants or containers and are excellent if you are going to be absent for a few days.

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Editor Cherin Harris-Tuck

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Master Gardeners of Simcoe County



Where to find us for free gardening advice!

Tuesday June 5, 2012 Barrie Garden Club hosts four Master Gardeners at a Pick Smart Session. Topics include ferns, clematis, bulbs & dry shade gardening. Southshore Centre, 205 Lakeshore Drive, Barrie 7:30

June 18, 2012 Pentang Hort Society hosts three Master Gardeners at their meeting on Thompson Road in the Brian Orser Arena. Clarinda Hamilton, Rhona Desroches & Kevin VanAndel presenting.

Tuesday June 19, 2012 Master Gardener Meeting, The White Pine Boardroom 2284 Nursery Rd. Midhurst, Guest Lecturer

Thursday June 21, 2012 **June 21, 2012** Clarinda Hamilton will speak to the Tottenham Hort Society on Annuals Amongst the Veggies
Tottenham, Clarinda Hamilton

Monday July 9, 2012 Guilford, Churchill Community Centre, 6322 Yonge Street, Greg Kalcic

Tuesday July 10, Lakeshore Library, Alcona, 967 Innisfil Beach Road, Joan Nieman-Agapas

Ask a Master Gardener books containing answers to your most common gardening questions are available at any of these speaking engagements for only \$10 or Gardening Guides for only \$1. Valuable references for you or as gifts for a gardening friend!



For information on arranging a lecture for your group please contact Joan Nieman-Agapas 705-721-9088 or email her at inabarrie@yahoo.ca. For more information on Master Gardeners, visit our website: www.mgoi.ca