

# Living with Shade

## Plants for Shade

### Ground Cover or Low Border

**Australian Violet** Creeping violet with blue and white flowers all season. Blue and white flowers all seasons. The only perennial woodland violet for this area. Part to full shade.

**Chameleon Plant *Houttuynia*** From Korea. Heart-shaped foliage of yellow, green, bronze and scarlet red. Tiny white flowers in the summer. Sun or shade.

**Spiral Rush** Semi-evergreen, 12" to 18" sprawling clump, glossy dark green, twisted, coiling foliage. Light Shade, moist or boggy soils.

**Dwarf Monkey Grass:** Evergreen groundcover, 5", dark blue-green, smooth, fine textured foliage. Heavy shade, but best in part shade, moist well drained soil.

**Pigeonberry.** Native, 12", perennial groundcover. Tiny pink flowers and red fruit spring to fall. Birds love it. Part shade.

**Fimbriata Dutchman's Pipe** Small rounded green leaves. Blooms small burgundy and yellow flower spring to fall. Little vine or unique ground cover. Host plant for Pipe-vine swallowtail butterfly. Light shade.

**Gilbert's Peacock Ginger** Low mounding 6" to 8" root hardy ginger. Attractive lance-shaped leaves with white edging. Blooms violet flowers and dormant in winter. Shade, moist well-drained soil.

**Ficus sp.** Fig ivy and variegated fig ivy are excellent vines or groundcover. Sun, but will tolerate heavy shade.

### Mid-Size Plants

**Anthurium** Semi evergreen grass-like foliage. 12" to 14" with wands of star shaped white flowers. Good accent plant. Part sun to shade.

**Columbine** Available in 10" to 24" heights. Little Lantern is a native that wants afternoon shade and will bloom in all day partial shade. Yellow is evergreen, 24" and needs partial shade. Shade, will tolerate some direct sun.

**Hosta 'So Sweet'** Medium green leaves with gold border. Flowers with fragrant white flower in summer. Heat resistant, dormant in winter. Part shade.

**Inland Sea Oats** Native clumping grass. Green dangling seed heads in summer turn gold and tan in fall. Foliage is pale gold with purple shading in fall. Wet or dry conditions, with part or mostly shade.

**Cardamon Ginger** Fragrant foliage. Thick rhizomes with 24" lance-shaped dark green leaves. Root hardy. Shade to part sun with well drained soil.

**Ardesia crispa** Evergreen 2' to 3' shrub. Slow growing with glossy foliage, covered with clusters of bright red berries winter to spring. Full shade.

**Barleria** also known as Philippine violet. Loves heat, blue flowers. Tender but with protection will grow in partial shade

### Mid-Size to Tall Plants

**Acanthus, Bear's Breeches** A stately plant with large, leaves and tall flower spikes. Hardy, prefers almost full shade in our hot area.

**Aspidistra or Cast Iron Plant** Evergreen and reliable. Sometimes available with variegated leaves. Long clumping stemless leaves grows 3' to 4' tall. A proven tough plant for shade.

**Taro** 5' to 6' tall. Comes in black, green with bronze veins, and other variations to this. Tropical, but comes back from bulbs unless really severe winter. Part sun to shade.

**Shrimp Plant** Comes in red, orange, and white. Hardy perennial 3' to 4' Upright spires with colored bracts. Hummingbirds love it. Part shade.

**Ligularia Evergreen** 3' clumps with large glossy leaves. Blooms with clusters of yellow daisy-like flowers on 4' stalks. Shade, moist soil.



**Firespike** Red or pink with solid or variegated foliage. 4' and over tropical looking, rich glossy green leaves. 12" spikes of flowers in fall and will bloom into winter in protected area. Hummingbirds love it. Part shade to sun.

**Cat's Whiskers** Tender, shrubby perennial with large striking whiskery white flower spikes. Blooms spring to frost in part or semi shade. Hummingbird and butterfly nectar plant. Part shade.

**Grande Peacock Ginger** A majestic perennial ginger with large leaves with silver and dark green brush-stroke marking. Burgundy under-side. Small violet and white orchid-like flower emerge in spring. Dormant in winter. Shade with moist well-drained soil.

**Variegated Pinecone Ginger** Graceful, 4' variegated white and green foliage, pinecones which turn bright red after a brief flowering of creamy-yellow flowers. Deciduous, root hardy. Full shade.

**Oakleaf Hydrangea** Native 4-6' shrub with spectacular large foliage and panicles of creamy-white flowers in spring. Striking red-orange fall foliage. Loves shade but will tolerate part sun.

**Chinese Mahonia** Evergreen 3' to 4' shrub with dark green lance-like foliage on tight compact plant. Blooms with clusters of yellow flowers in fall. Part shade.

## Bed Preparation

### *Preparing Planting Beds (not under or near trees):*

- Till into the soil a 4" layer of compost to a depth of 6". The finished bed should have a slight crown in the center to promote good drainage. Cover the finished bed with a 4" layer of mulch.

### *A Few Notes on Trees:*

- The majority of a tree's roots are within the top 24" of soil.
- The critical root zone extends from the trunk out to the dripline (edge of canopy). Trees draw most of the nutrients and moisture out of the soil within their critical root zone which is why it can be difficult, aside from the low light, to grow healthy plants under trees.

### *Preparing Planting Beds Under Trees:*

- Do your best to plant in areas that are less full of roots.
- Add a 2"-4" layer of compost over the surface. By hand, dig it in to a depth of 6". If the roots are very thick dig it in only 3".
- Plant small gallon size plants, a smaller hole to dig means less damage. Cover all bare soil in mulch.

### *Warnings and "No-No's" when working within the critical root zone:*

- Some trees tolerate construction better than others, research before you go to work.
- Keep digging and trenching to a minimum. While working within this critical zone is allowable, be mindful of the ratio of disturbed to undisturbed area, 30% disturbed to 60% undisturbed should be the maximum.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from the trunk.
- NO rototilling. Avoid raised beds.

