

Some flowers prefer the shade

Shady spots in the garden need not be colorless; a variety of flowering plants will grow and thrive in shade.

Lee Taylor, Extension horticulture specialist at Michigan State University, says some of the most popular flowering annuals for shady spots include Impatiens, tuberous begonias and coleus. For areas shaded part of the day, salvia and nicotiana are well suited.

Impatiens is probably the No. 1 annual for shaded gardens. The plants form low, flower-covered mounds as the summer progresses. Flowers range in size from one to two inches and come in a rainbow of colors, from white through pink and lavender to coral, salmon and red. Bicolors and double and semidouble flowers are among the more recent introductions.

Large masses of impatiens are stunning in shaded beds. The plants are also well suited to container culture.

Tuberous begonias are started indoors in early spring and planted outdoors after the danger of frost is past. Some of them produce flowers up to a foot across in brilliant shades of red, pink, coral, salmon, yellow and white. Others produce numerous smaller flowers ranging in size from

an inch across to 2 to 2½ inches. Pendulous varieties are available for use in hanging baskets. Tuberous begonias should be planted in well drained, shaded spots, watered regularly and fertilized every two weeks to encourage good flower production throughout the summer.

Coleus is grown for its brightly colored, often exotically shaped foliage. The spikes of lavender flowers should be pinched off before the flowers open to keep plants from producing seed and going into decline. Coleus foliage can be almost any color, from creamy yellow to rosy pink and green to nearly black. Leaves may be fringed, notched, lacy or wrinkled. A mass of coleus in one color gives a better visual effect than a mixture of colors and types.

A spot that gets sun in the morning and shade in the afternoon is just the place for salvia and nicotina (flowering tobacco). Both these plants need some sun but do quite nicely in partial shade.

The traditional color for salvia is red, but recently introduced varieties offer spikes of blue-violet, ivory, orange, rose and blue flowers. Nicotiana produces trumpet-shaped flowers in shades of pink, red, white and yellow and perfumes the garden in the evening. Nicotiana can be

seeded in the garden, started indoors or bought as bedding plants. It tends to reseed itself, though offspring of hybrid plants may be disappointing.

Generally, Taylor says, the deeper the shade, the taller plants will grow. Dappled shade is ideal for shade plantings.

Quite often, the limiting factor in shade-grown annuals is not light but water — nearby tree roots take up available water from the soil. To meet the needs of shallow-rooted annuals, Taylor recommends thorough surface watering or trickle irrigation to provide an inch of water a week when rainfall is scarce. Growing plants under trees in containers is another way to get around the moisture problem.

A spot that gets morning sun followed by shade is better for shade-tolerant plants than a spot that is shaded in the morning but subjected to late afternoon and evening sun. The sunlight in the latter half of the day can be very hot and harsh, especially on the south or west side of a building, where the heat buildup can be intense. A northern exposure, on the other hand, that receives no direct sun but plenty of bright light, will provide very good light for growth and bloom of shade-tolerant plants.

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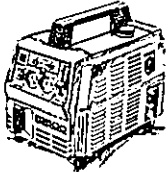
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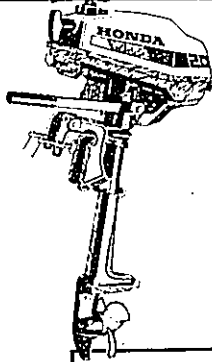
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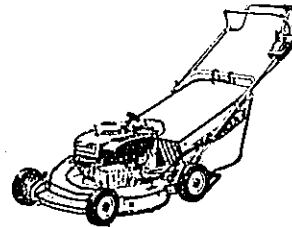
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