

Shade gardens provide opportunity

Gardening in the shade can be a challenge but beautiful gardens can be the result if the gardener knows the soil, the amount of shade present, and which plants to use. The best approach is not to feel it is an insurmountable problem, but an opportunity to grow different plants and a challenge that can be overcome.

While the weather is too cold to go outside and work, this is the perfect time to study what to do when we can be in the garden. Learn what kind of soil you have, acid, alkaline, the pH, how to amend the soil if you wish, limb-up trees, make raised beds, and suitable paths.

There are different kinds of shade. 1. *Partial shade* receives three to six hours of sun a day, or the area is dappled sunlight (found under branches of slender trees, or mature trees with a high, leafy canopy). 2. *Light shade* may have full sun for an hour or two a day but the area is still bright the rest of the day. 3. *Medium shade* or half shade is found under trees with branches 20 feet off the ground, where shade is cast by a north-facing wall, when there is reflected sun-

GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

light, or when the area is shady for four or five hours of the brightest daylight hours.

Full shade occurs beneath branches with dense foliage and under trees with low but fairly open branches. Dense shade is the hardest for plants to survive, because of the deep, cool shadow cast all the time by mature evergreen trees, or shade from the north side of a nearby building.

Take a good look at the shady areas on your property and decide which kind of shade you have, then the selection of what to grow can be made more easily. Keep in mind that as the season progresses, shade conditions will also change. Rather than list suitable plants, a good book will help, as each garden is different. You will find a plethora of plants

to fill your garden space, from wildflowers, annuals, perennials, shrubs, trees, and ground covers. Just be sure the plants are hardy in our zones 5 and 6.

An excellent way to learn more about gardening in the shade is to attend the Horticulture/Care of the Shade Symposium, "Solutions for the Shade Gardener," on Saturday, Feb. 16, at the Michigan State University Conference Center, 811 West Square Lake Road in Troy. It begins at 8 a.m. and continues to 4 p.m.

Five outstanding speakers will take you through their personal experiences and the inside information to achieve great results. They are: Gary L. Koller, the Horticultural Fellow of Arnold Arboretum, and Nan Sinton, both professional horticulturists and landscape designers. They have taught "The Adventurous Gardener" seminar for Horticulture magazine for several years. Their subject: *Structuring the Shade Garden*.

Carol Klein runs Glebe Cottage Plants, a Devon nursery internationally renowned for its exciting gardenworthy perennials. She has won at the Chelsea Flower Show and is a presenter

on TV in the UK. Her presentation: *Light Touches - Cottage Gardening in the Shade*, promises to enlighten all participants.

Darrell Probst, owner of Garden Vision, a retail mail order nursery specializing in Epimediums and other shade plants, has traveled extensively collecting these plants. He is also a plant breeder. He will share *New Stars for the Shade - Epimediums* and other treasures as he introduces a great range of these flowers.

Deborah Swanson, extension educator for Plymouth County Extension and the University of Massachusetts Extension Landscape and Nursery Program, trains landscape and nursery professionals and writes for several publications. She will present *Shade Mechanics - the Real Know How of Gardening in Less Than Perfect Light*. She teaches the correct methods to be successful in shade gardening.

All registrations must be received by Feb. 12. The fee: \$99 for Horticulture subscribers, \$95 for members of Cranbrook Gardens Auxiliary and \$109 for all others. Registration includes all handouts and refreshments, as well

as a boxed lunch. A refund will be given to participants (less a \$10 processing fee) who withdraw by Feb. 6. No refunds will be issued after this deadline.

Please call 1-800-395-1901 to receive a brochure and/or to register (with a credit card), or fax (617)367-8304.

Good Garden Tip
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houseplants are very easy to use and do the job.

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734) 963-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248) 644-1314.

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