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Shade-tolerant plants help to complete landscapes



Shade-tolerant plants, such as coleus, can add color and appeal to shady areas of a landscape.

Plants need sunlight to thrive and grow, but some need less sunlight than others. People who find their landscapes are less supportive to sun-loving plants can choose from a variety of shade-tolerant plants, shrubs and trees.

Shade tolerance refers to a plant's ability to withstand low levels of light. Certain plants have adapted this feature to survive in the wild. Plants that grow at the base of forest floors, for example, will get less sunlight than others outside of the tree canopy. Such adaptations enable a wide variety of foliage to grow even though they are not exposed to much sunlight.

While sun-loving plants often have broad leaves and expend significant energy to capture sunlight for photosynthesis, shade-tolerant plants expend less energy and tend to be more efficient consumers of soil nutrients and sunlight.

Penn State Extension's

Plant and Pests division says the amount of shade a plant is growing under will directly affect the density of the foliage and the plant's flowering and fruiting characteristics. Blending shade-tolerant plants into the landscape can be an effective use of space. Before choosing plants for an existing landscape, it's important to assess the level of shade or sun the plants will receive.

- **Heavy shade:** Heavy shade is when no direct sunlight reaches a plant. This occurs at the base of northern-facing walls or beneath thick tree canopies.

- **Full sun:** Areas that receive full sun enjoy direct sunlight between six and eight hours per day.

- **Moderate shade:** These sites have reflected sunlight that may come off of water features.

- **Light shade:** Plants in these areas will get partially filtered or dappled sunlight. Once homeowners under-

stand which type of shade they are dealing with, they can then visit plant nurseries and select their plants. Most greenery comes with care instructions that include recommendations regarding the amount of shade/sunlight the plant will need to do well. If further assistance is needed, a knowledgeable employee can make suggestions based on landscape needs.

Those who are looking for some preliminary guidance when it comes to selecting shade-tolerant shrubs, plants or trees can consult the following list.

- **Bleeding heart:** Bleeding heart, or *Dicentra spectabilis*, is typically found in woodlands. It's a perennial in the poppy family that produces mounded foliage and arching vine-like stems of heart-shaped flowers in the spring.

- **Amethyst flower:** *Browallia* hybrids offer star-shaped blooms of blue and violet. These plants will bil-

Wednesday, April 25, 2018



low out of hanging baskets or containers, and they prefer warm shade or filtered sunlight.

- **Coleus:** The coleus, *Solenostemon scutellarioides*, is another perennial that can have a variety of different leaf colors and striations.

- **Witch hazels:** These are a genus in the family Hamamelidaceae, which has four different species in North America. This shrub or small tree features arching branches with dense, multi-stemmed clumps. Witch hazel produces flowers in the late autumn when most other plants are sparse.

- **Bayberry:** *Myrica pensylvanica* can grow in partial shade as a hedge or natural property divider. The leaves of this shrub are aromatic when crushed. The shrub will produce tiny, gray/white fruits in late summer.

- **English Ivy:** Also known as *Hedera helix*, this trailing plant is widely cultivated as an ornamental plant. It will spread easily and can become invasive.

Those searching for shade-tolerant trees can choose among Sugar maple, Black alder, Flowering dogwood, and White spruce, among others.

Shade-tolerant plants can make welcome additions to the landscape, offering greenery and color in the darker areas of a property.

Minimize dust while renovating

Even though dust is ever-present both inside and outside of a home, when renovations are in full swing, dusty conditions are often exacerbated. Whether a home is new or old, numerous substances can be stirred up when removing walls, refinishing floors, removing tile, or expanding living spaces. These include silica from drywall, lead, asbestos, paint particles, and even waste from bugs or rodents.

Homeowners who want to remodel with minimal construction debris floating through the air — both for health purposes and general cleanliness — may find these proactive steps helpful.

- **Prepare dust-containment plans.** If a contractor is involved, it is often his or her responsibility to minimize dust. Do-it-yourselfers must make dust containment a priority. Protecting the floor and keeping the dust confined only to work areas can be achieved with plastic sheeting and other barriers.

- **Designate an entrance and exit.** The experts at This Old House say it is best to choose one doorway as the only means in and out of a work area. Ideally, this doorway should lead to the outdoors. All other doorways should be sealed on both sides.

- **Remove extraneous items.** It's best to remove clutter from the room, including any furniture that can be taken out of the space. This helps items from becoming dirty and hazardous particles from settling into nooks and crannies.

- **Close vents and registers.** If forced air systems are



Cutting renovation materials outdoors can minimize dust generated in work areas.

part of the home, it's best to divert air away from the work area. Block vents and intake registers so that dust does not clog the system or transfer to other rooms.

- **Cut items outside.** Design advice site Houzz says that some power tools have vacuum extractors to suck up dust at the point of contact, removing 90 percent of dust where it is generated. For those who do not have access to these tools, cutting and sanding can be done outdoors to keep dust outside.

- **Open a window.** If weather permits, an open

window can provide ventilation. Another idea is to create an air vacuum in the work area. Picking a window at the far end of the work area and mounting a window fan blowing outward can suck dust out and away from other areas of the house.

- **Clean up daily.** By keeping on top of dust, including sweeping and vacuuming the work area frequently, dust will not accumulate and migrate elsewhere.

Dust is a common side effect of home renovation projects, but it can be minimized.

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