Plants for Shade

Plants that will tolerate more shade are designated with an *

**Trees (Botanical Name - Common Name)**
Most shade tolerant trees are small, understory trees that grow naturally in woods openings or along forest edges. They are best suited to growing in partial or dappled shade, or in morning sun and afternoon shade.

- *Acer palmatum* - Japanese Maple
- *Amelanchier* - Serviceberry
- *Asimina triloba* - Pawpaw
- *Cercis canadensis* - Eastern Redbud
- *Chionanthus virginicus* - Fringe Tree
- *Cornus florida* - Flowering Dogwood
- *Cornus kousa* - Kousa Dogwood
- *Franklinia alatamaha* - Franklin Tree
- *Halesia* species - Silverbell
- *Ilex* species - Holly
- *Magnolia virginiana* - Sweet Bay
- *Nyssa sylvatica* - Black Gum
- *Oxydendrum arboreum* - Sourwood
- *Podocarpus macrophyllus* - Plum Yew
- *Sassafras albidum* - Sassafras
- *Stewartia* species - Stewartia
- *Styrax* species - Snowbell
- *Tsuga* species - Hemlock

**Shrubs (Botanical Name - Common Name)**
Most shrubs are also shade tolerant rather than shade loving and will grow best in dappled or partial shade or in morning sun and afternoon shade.

- *Abelia x grandiflora* - Glossy Abelia
- *Aucuba japonica* - Aucuba
- *Buxus* species - Boxwood
- *Camellia* species - Camellia
- *Cephalotaxus harringtonii* - Japanese Plum Yew
- *Cycas revoluta* - Sago Palm
- *Euonymus japonicus* - Japanese Euonymus
- *Fatsia japonica* - Fatsia
- *Gardenia jasminoides* - Gardenia
- *Ilex* species - Holly
- *Illicium* species - Anise Tree
- *Kalmia latifolia* - Mountain Laurel
- *Leucothoe* species - Leucothoe
- *Loropetalum chinense* - Chinese Fringe
- *Mahonia* species - Grape Holly
- *Michelia figo* - Banana Shrub
- *Nandina domestica* - Heavenly Bamboo
- *Osmanthus* species - Osmanthus
- *Pieris japonica* - Japanese Pieris
- *Pittosporum tobira* - Japanese Pittosporum
- *Podocarpus macrophyllus* - Plum Yew
- *Prunus laurocerasus* - Cherry Laurel
- *Rhododendron* species - Azalea
- *Rhododendron* species - Rhododendron
- *Ruscus aculeatus* - Butcher’s Broom
- *Sabal minor* - Dwarf Palmetto
- *Sarcococca* species - Sweet Box
- *Ternstroemia gymnanthera* - Cleyera
- *Viburnum* species - Viburnum
- *Viburnum tinus* - Laurustinus

**Deciduous Shrubs**
- *Aesculus parviflora* - Bottlebrush Buckeye
- *Aronia arbutifolia* - Red Chokeberry
- *Callicarpa* species - Beautyberry
- *Calycanthus floridus* - Carolina Sweetshrub
Groundcovers (Botanical Name - Common Name)

Many groundcovers are suited to growing in shade, even relatively heavy shade. Several vines and perennials may also be used as groundcovers.

- Ajuga species - Bugleweed
- *Ardisia japonica - Japanese Ardisia
- *Asarum canadense - Wild Ginger
- *Asarum europaeum - European Ginger
- *Aspidistra elatior - Cast Iron Plant
- Ceratostigma plumbaginoides - Leadwort
- Chrysogonum virginianum - Green and Gold
- *Convallaria majalis - Lily Of The Valley
- *Epimedium species - Barrenwort
- *Euonymus fortunei - Wintercreeper
- *Galax urceolata - Galax
- *Gaultheria amount - Sweet Woodruff
- Geranium macrorrhizum - Bigroot Cranesbill
- Helleborus species - Hellebore
- Lamium maculatum - Dead Nettle
- *Liriopoid species - Lilyturf
- Mazus reptans - Mazus
- *Mitchella repens - Partridgeberry
- *Ophiopogon japonicus - Mondo Grass
- *Pachysandra species - Pachysandra
- *Sarcococca hookerana v. humilis - Sweet Box
- *Vinca species – Periwinkle

Vines (Botanical Name - Common Name)

- Actinidia kolomikta - Variegated Kiwi
- Akebia quinata - Fiveleaf Akebia
- Aristolochia durior - Dutchman's Pipe
- Bignonia capreolata - Cross Vine
- Clematis armandii - Armand's Clematis
- Clytostoma calyceum - Violet Trumpet
- Decumaria barbara - Wild Climbing Hydrangea
- *Ficus pumila - Creeping Fig
- Gelsemium sempervirens - Carolina Jessamine
- *Hedera helix - English Ivy
- Hydrangea anomolla ssp. petiolaris - Climbing Hydrangea
- Lonicera species - Honeysuckle
- Parthenocissus quinquefolia - Virginia Creeper
- Parthenocissus tricuspidata - Boston Ivy
- Schizophragma hydrangeoides - Japanese Hydrangea
- Smilax lanceolata - Evergreen Smilax
- Trachelospernum species - Star Jasmine
- Wisteria frutescens - American Wisteria

Perennials (Botanical Name - Common Name)

- Acanthus species - Bear’s Breech
- Alchemilla mollis - Lady’s Mantle
- Anemone species - Anemone
- Aquilegia species - Columbine
- *Arisaema triphyllum - Jack-In-The-Pulpit
- *Arum italicum - Painted Arum
- *Arum italicum - Jack-In-The-Pulpit
- *Arum italicum - Painted Arum
- Astilbe species - Astilbe
- *Asarum species - Wild Gingers
- *Aspidistra elatior - Cast Iron Plant
- Begonia grandis - Hardy Begonia
- Bergenia cordifolia - Heartleaf Bergenia
- Brunnera macrophylla - Siberian Bugloss
- Carex elata - Golden Sedge
- Ceratostigma plumbaginoides - Plumbago
- Chelone obliqua - Turtlehead
- Chrysogonum virginianum - Green And Gold
• Cimicifuga species - Bugbane
• *Convallaria majalis - Lily-Of-The-Valley
• Cyclamen species - Hardy Cyclamen
• Dicentra species - Bleeding Heart
• Digitalis species - Foxglove
• *Disporum flavum - Fairy-Bells
• Eupatorium coelestinum - Mist Flower
• Ferns (most) - Ferns
• *Galium odoratum - Sweet Woodruff
• Geranium maculatum - Wild Cranesbill
• *Gillenia trifoliata - Bowman’s Root
• *Helleborus foetidus - Bearfoot Hellebore
• *Helleborus x hybridus - Lenten Rose
• Heuchera species - Coral Bells
• Hosta species - Plantain Lily
• Iris cristata - Crested Iris
• *Kirengeshoma palmata - Golden Wax Bells
• Lamium maculatum - Spotted Dead Nettle
• Lobelia cardinalis - Cardinal Flower
• Lobelia siphilitica - Great Blue Lobelia
• *Mertensia virginica - Virginia Bluebells
• *Phlox divaricata - Wild Sweet William
• Phlox stolonifera - Creeping Wood Phlox
• *Polygonatum species - Solomon’s Seal
• Primula species - Primrose
• *Pulmonaria species - Lungwort
• Salvia koyamae - Japanese Yellow Sage
• Saxifraga stolonifera - Strawberry Begonia
• *Shortia galacifolia - Oconee Bells
• Sisyrinchium angustifolium - Blue-Eyed Grass
• Smilacina racemosa - False Solomon’s Seal
• Spigelia marilandica - Indian Pink
• Thalictrum species - Meadow Rue
• *Tiarella species - Foam Flower
• *Tradescantia virginiana - Spiderwort
• *Tricyrtis species - Toad Lily
• *Trillium species - Wake Robin
• Viola species - Violet

Bulbs (Botanical Name - Common Name)
Many early blooming bulbs such as crocus, scillas, snowdrops, and species tulips will grow well in areas shaded in the summer by deciduous trees. These small bulbs bloom and mature their foliage in the sun before the trees finish leafing out. The bulbs below will grow well in open or dappled shade.
• Anemone blanda - Grecian Windflower
• Anemone coronaria - Poppy Anemone
• Begonia species - Tuberous Begonia
• Caladium species - Caladium
• Colchicum species - Autumn Crocus
• Crinum species - Milk And Wine Lily
• Crocus species - Fall Blooming Crocus
• Cyclamen species - Cyclamen
• *Endymion hispanica - Spanish Bluebell
• *Galtonia candicans - Summer Hyacinth
• *Gladiolus callianthus - Peacock Orchid
• *Hymenocallis species - Summer Daffodil
• Ipheion uniflorum - Star Flower
• Leucojum aestivum - Summer Snowflake
• Lilium candidum - Madonna Lilies
• Lycoris species - Surprise Lilies
• Muscari species - Grape Hyacinth
• Narcissus species - Daffodils
• *Zantedeschia species - Calla Lily
• Zephyranthes species - Rain Lily

Ornamental Grasses (Botanical Name - Common Name)
• Acorus gramineus - Japanese Sweetflag
• Carex species - Sedge
• Chasmanthium latifolium - Northern Sea Oats
• Deschampsia cespitosa - Tufted Hair Grass
• Hakonechloa macra ‘Aureola’ - Japanese Forest Grass
• Sasa veitchii - Veitch’s Bamboo

Annuals (Botanical Name - Common Name)
Most annuals need at least 6 hours of sun to flower well, although many will tolerate shade in the afternoon, if they have had a full morning of sun. These annuals will bloom with less sun, although all will need some sun for flowering.
• Abutilon species - Flowering Maple
• Begonia species - Begonia
• *Caladium species - Caladium
• Consolida species - Larkspur
• Digitalis purpurea Foxy Group - Annual Foxglove
• *Impatiens species - Impatiens
• Lobelia erinus - Edging Lobelia
• *Mimulus species - Monkey Flower
• Myosotis sylvatica - Forget-Me-Not
• Nicotiana sylvestris - Woodland Tobacco
• Solenostemon scutellarioides - Coleus
• *Torenia species - Wishbone Flower
• Viola tricolor - Johnny-Jump-Up
• **Viola varieties - Pansy**

When selecting plants using this list, remember that a number of factors determine the suitability of a plant for a particular location. In addition to adaptability to shade, also consider moisture availability, soil type, hardiness and heat tolerance, and other factors.

Prepared by Karen Russ, HGIC Horticulture Specialist, Clemson University. (New 10/04.)

This information is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service is implied. All recommendations are for South Carolina conditions and may not apply to other areas. Use pesticides only according to the directions on the label. All recommendations for pesticide use are for South Carolina only and were legal at the time of publication, but the status of registration and use patterns are subject to change by action of state and federal regulatory agencies. Follow all directions, precautions and restrictions that are listed.