



Landscaping in the Shade in Alachua County

Fact Sheet # 66

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Alachua County is known for its beautiful tree canopy. However, finding the right plants to grow in constant deep shade can be a challenge. To help solve this dilemma the local Master Gardeners have compiled a list of plants that, in their observations, can thrive in shade in Alachua County.

The plants listed are easy to grow, noninvasive, and can be purchased from retail garden centers and local plant shops (some seasonal availability). Additional sources are local farmers markets, Kanapaha Botanical Gardens festivals, semi-annual native plant sales at Morningside Nature Center, and the annual Master Gardener plant sale.

Plants must be in the right location ("right plant, right place") to grow well, so consider these factors before going shopping:

- Is there sun on the area at any time during the day? If so, then you have partial shade and there will be even more plants available for you to choose from.
- Is your site moist or dry?
- Is the site covered with exposed roots? Cover with mulch or soil not to exceed 3 inches in depth, then add plants. It may be easier to plant in pots positioned among the roots.
- Do you want flowers or just plants to cover the area? In general, plants in deep shade tend to be dark green with few flowers. Selecting plants with variegation or green and white leaves will make the area more interesting.

- Do you want the plants to fill an area or hide an object? Check out how tall and wide a plant grows prior to planting. Generally, the taller plants should be in the rear of the planted area. Shrubs growing in shady areas can get leggy, so position carefully.
- When planting under trees that lose their leaves, select plant varieties that bloom early in winter or early spring while the tree is bare for greater visual effect.
- Several varieties of a plant may be available. Detailed information about these varieties can be found with research. Use the scientific names to be certain of a specific plant.

We hope this list will help you add beauty to the areas of your yard that are deeply shaded. If you desire more information, check the web site edis.ifas.ufl.edu, call the Alachua County Extension office at 352-955-2402, or email your questions to mag@alachuacounty.us

Trees:

Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)*
Silverbell (*Halesia spp.*)*
Snowbell (*Styrax americanus*)*
Swamp dogwood (*Cornus foemina*)*

Palms:

Dwarf palmetto (*Sabal minor*)*
Lady palm (*Rhapis excelsa*)
Needle palm (*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*)*
Saw palmetto green or silver (*Serenoa repens*)*



Shrubs:

Anise Florida (*Illicium floridanum*)*
Anise yellow (*Illicium parviflorum*)*
Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*)*
Cleyera japonica (*Ternstroemia gymnanthera*)
Coontie (*Zamia floridana*)*
Mahonia (*Mahonia fortunei*)
Oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*)*
Summersweet/Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*)*
Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*)*
Tea Olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*)

Groundcovers:

Autumn fern (*Dryopteris* spp.)
Aztec grass (*Ophiopogon intermedius*)
Caladium (*Caladium x hortulanum*)
Cast iron plant (*Aspidistra elatior*)
Cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*)*
Creeping Yew (*Taxus prostrata*)
Hart's tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*)
Holly fern (*Cyrtomium falcatum*)
Leatherleaf fern (*Rumohra adiantiformis*)
Liriope (*Liriope muscari*)
Mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonica*)
Southern Shield Fern (*Thelypteris kunthii*)*
Partridge berry (*Mitchella repens*)*
River oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*)*
Selaginella (*Selaginella* spp)
Southern Woods Fern (*Dryopteris normalis*)*
Virginia chain fern (*Woodwardia virginica*)*
Violet (*Viola* spp.)*

Perennials:

Bromeliads:

Aechmea, *Bilbergia*, *Neoregelia*
Blood lily (*Haemanthus multiflorus*)
Blue ginger (*Dichorisandra thyrsiflora*)
Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)*

Gingers:

Peacock (*Kaempferia* spp.)
Shell ginger (*Alpinia zerumbet*)
Dancing girl (*Globba bulbifera*)
Jacobinia (*Justicia carnea*)
Mona lavender (*Plectranthus 'Mona lavender'*)
Walking iris (*Neomarica gracilis*)

Annuals:

Chocolate soldier (*Pseuderanthemum alatum*)
Coleus (shade varieties)
Persian shield (*Strobilanthes*) Perennial that is grown as annual in this area
Impatiens (shade varieties)
Wishbone flower (*Torenia fournieri*)

Plants that are more difficult to locate to purchase and may be more difficult to grow:

Magic Flower (*Achimenes*)
Chinese ground orchid (*Bletilla striata*)
Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
Shiny lyonia, fetterbush, *Lyonia lucida*)*
Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*)*
Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum* spp.)
Toad lily (*Tricyrtis*)
Wake robin (*Trillium* sp.)*
Pipestem (*Agarista populifolia*)*
Dog Hobble (*Leucothoe axillaris*)*

*Native

Florida Anise, *Illicium floridanum*



The Native, Florida Anise is a great landscape shrub for deep shade. The showy red flowers will attract anyone's attention as they visit your garden.