

## GLORIOUS SHADE GARDENS

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### Lecture based on 'Glorious Shade', Timber Press 2017

Shade Gardens, especially those graced with dappled shadows from an elegant shade tree, are some of the coolest and most peaceful areas of our garden. They are a delight in the heat of the summer and a joy of changing beauty throughout the year. Gardening around tree roots and maybe in the rain shadow of a building or tree canopy do bring some challenges that are not present when gardening in sun. However, like other aspects of gardening there are things that you can learn to help you make the garden more sustainable, beautiful and plant rich.

The first thing to understand about shade gardening is that you have to do your homework. The most useful thing that you can do to start is to walk around your neighborhood and see what plants are thriving there. Visit local public gardens where plants are labeled and take notes. Then back in your own garden start watching the sun and its path across the sky. Where is the garden shaded? At what times of the year is there most shade? Watch the shaded patterns and decide where you would like to garden and what plants will likely thrive there.

The next step is to think about climate, weather and soil moisture. How much rain do you receive? Are there parts of your garden that are shaded and moist or shaded and dry? By observing how much shade you have and also how much moisture is in your soil you can make a list of appropriate plants for your garden.

The final aspect is personal preference. I have been lucky enough to visit gardens in many parts of the world. No two gardens have ever been the same. You like certain plants or you don't. There is no point growing plants that don't bring you joy – compost them or give them away to someone who will love them! Once you have a list of plants that you can grow, select only the ones that you *want* to grow.

Other things to consider:

- Final height and width of plants – some get really big – give them space
- Season(s) of the year when the plant is interesting – Year round interest
- Colors of foliage, bark and flower
- Screening of neighbors if needed
- New shade producing trees or shrubs – get planting as soon as possible!
- Interesting plants at high, medium and low levels
- Ground covering plants
- Include plants that are native to your area

## Jenny Rose Carey's Suggested 'Glorious Shade' Plants

### A. Decorative Understory Small Trees and Large Shrubs

1. *Cornus controversa* and others – Dogwood
2. *Hamamelis x hybrida* – Witchhazel
3. *Hydrangea* – Hydrangea
4. *Mahonia aquifolium* and others – Oregon grape
5. *Rhododendron* – species and cultivars, including azaleas

### B. Ground Covers

1. Mosses
2. *Asarum caudatum* and others – Wild ginger
3. *Cornus canadensis* and *C. unalaschkensis* – Bunchberry
4. *Epimedium* – Bishop's hat
5. *Vancouveria hexandra* and others – American barrenwort

### C. Ferns

1. *Adiantum pedatum* and others – Maidenhair fern
2. *Athyrium filix-femina* – Lady fern
3. *Blechnum spicant* – Deer fern
4. *Polypodium vulgare* and *P. glycerrhiza* – Polypody
5. *Polystichum munitum*, *P. polyblepharum*, *P. setiferum* – Sword and shield fern

### D. Perennial backbone plants – Hosta! Plus:

1. *Brunnera macrophylla* – Perennial forget-me-not
2. *Helleborus* – Hellebore
3. *Maianthemum racemosum* – False Solomon's seal
4. *Polygonatum* - Solomon's seal
5. *Tricyrtis* – Toad lily

### E. Perennial accent plants

1. *Actaea pachypoda*, *A. racemosa*, *A. simplex* - Bugbane
2. *Dicentra formosa* and *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* – Bleeding hearts
3. *Primula kisoana*, *P. veris*, *P. vulgaris* – Primrose
4. *Thalictrum rochebruneanum* and *T. polycarpum* – Meadow rue
5. *Trillium ovatum* and others - Trillium

### F. Small woodland geophytes – bulbs, corms etc.

1. *Crocus tommasinianus*, other species and cultivars - Crocus
2. *Cyclamen coum*, *C. hederifolium* - Cyclamen
3. *Fritillaria meleagris*, *F. pudica* and others - Fritillary
4. *Galanthus* – Snowdrops
5. *Scilla*, *Chionodoxa* and *Puschkinia* – blue minor bulbs

If you are interested in seeing an East Coast woodland shade garden, feel free to follow my Instagram account @Northviewgarden