

Annuals for Shade



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Many beautiful plants are available to be planted in the landscape around the home. However, the difficulty arises when there are areas in the landscape that receive very little sunlight. Sometimes, the entire area around the home is shady which means that without proper selection of the plants that will survive under low light conditions, the landscape faces the possibility of being quite drab. No one enjoys planting plants and then having them do poorly or die.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to know when an area is too shady so it may become necessary to try a few different annuals that normally require a fair amount of sunlight. If this has been done with little success, then only those plants that do well under low light intensity should be planted.

There are many different groups of plants that could be considered for use in shady areas. There is great interest today in planting flowering plants in the landscape as they add so much to the overall landscape picture. Generally, if plants are to produce flowers, they require sunlight. It happens that some annual flowers require less light than others in order to grow and flower. **Some annual flowers are selected on the basis of foliage color**, rather than the flowers (coleus, for example).

One of the most common problems encountered when using annual flowers in slightly shady areas is that the soil stays wet which results in problems with the roots of the plants. Therefore, it is advisable to take even more care when preparing the soil for planting in these areas. Try to work into the soil some organic matter such as well-rotted manure or compost or fine pine bark soil conditioner. If possible, add an inch or two of perlite (slow release nitrogen fertilizer) and work it into the soil.

For shady areas some of the following plants are suggested:

Fibrous begonias, tuberous begonias, caladium, coleus, forget-me-nots (*Myosotis*), foxglove, impatiens, lobelia, pansy, periwinkle, torenia, collinsias, balsam, godetia, monkey flower (*Mimulus* hybrids), nicotiana, woodruff (*Asperula orientalis*), baby blue eyes (*Nemophila*), Virginia stock (*Malcomia*), English daisy, bachelor's buttons, feverfew, cleome, California poppy, snow-on-the mountain, sweet alyssum and evening primrose.

Since most of the plants growing in shade will not grow as rapidly and spread out as much, it may be necessary to plant them closer together in order to get a more attractive effect. The plants should be fertilized with a dry complete fertilizer with an analysis such as 4-16-16, 5-10-5, 5-10-10, 5-20-20 or 6-10-4 at the rate of 3 - 4 lbs. per 100 square feet of bed area. Try to select an organic fertilizer. Liquid fertilizers are also quite satisfactory and can be used if applied at rate given on the container pack-age. Apply the fertilizer one week after planting and monthly thereafter through August. Always be sure to syringe off any fertilizer that gets on the foliage of the plant.