

Top 20 Perennials for Shade

Columbine Hinckleyana - *Aquilegia chrysantha* var. *Hinkleyana*

Shade loving perennial blooms in May. Beautiful yellow blossoms with a tropical look. Looks great planted with ferns or Turks Cap. Evergreen foliage has a blue green tint. Columbines will cross pollinate and are good re-seeders. Plant several for a nice grouping. Height:12"-36" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Coral Bells - *Heuchera sanguinea*

Blooms in late spring with multitudes of tubular coral flowers carried on tall spikes above the foliage. Evergreen plant makes a low neat mound of dark green foliage. Attractive foliage makes a good border plant even when not in bloom. Also fine in rock gardens. Light: Shade Height:18" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Hellebore 'Lenten Rose' - *Helleborus orientalis*

Attractive leathery foliage on a compact well behaved plant. Graceful nodding flowers of pink to purple in early to mid spring. Long-lived plants for sheltered moist rockeries and well drained woody beds. Light: Shade Height: 8"-10"

Penstemon 'Gulf Coast' or 'Brazos' - *Penstemon tenuis*

Blooms pale pink in spring and sometimes in fall. Will perform well in poorly drained soil as well as sandy loam. Semi-evergreen in winter. Light: Sun/Shade Height:18"

Sage Lyre Leaf - *Salvia lyrata*

'Lyre Leaf' sage reaches 8" when in bloom in spring, otherwise it is a ground hugging perennial. Blooms are light lavender atop green and purple foliage. Can be used as a ground cover and will grow under trees. Will withstand light foot traffic. Light: Sun/Shade Height: 8"-10" Soil: Well Drained

Spiderwort - *Tradescantia spp.*

Beautiful blue-green foliage and bright purple, white, pink or blue flowers in spring and summer if watered well. Can be used in shade or sun. May go dormant in summer. Height:18" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Turk's Cap - *Malvaviscus arboreus drummondii*

Bright green foliage great for lighting up shady areas. Blooms red hearts May to November. Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. Will take any soil and any light. Height:2'-4'

Violet Native Wood - *Viola missouriensis*

Beautiful creamy violet blooms appear in early spring and continue through spring. Dark green leaves make great ground cover under trees. Propagate by division and by re-seeding. Light: Shade Height: 2"-6" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Wood Sorrel, Pink or White - *Oxalis crassipes*

Old favorite low-growing edging plant, forming a low mound. Dainty pink or white flowers bloom all spring and summer. Clover-like leaves emanating from a cluster of bulbs. Leaves are even attractive in themselves. Blooms in sun or light shade. Very dependable. Height: 10"-12" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Yellow Archangel - *Lamium galeobdolon*

Fast growing groundcover with lovely silver variegated leaves and yellow flowers in spring. Excellent for lighting up shady areas as a groundcover or trailer in pots. Height: 8"-12" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Leopard Plant - *Farfugium japonica* var. *'Auro-maculata'*

Large, glossy-green circular leaves splashed with yellow. Autumn brings yellow daisy-like flowers on tall spikes. A great plant for damp, shady places. Height: 18"-24" Soil: Moist

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Wood Fern - *Thelypteris kunthii*

Vigorous native fern for shaded areas. Will tolerate morning sun. Not evergreen. Spreads by underground rhizomes. Plant in fertile well drained soil. Use as a backdrop for shorter plants. Also makes a good summer ground cover for spring bulbs. Height:36" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Japanese Holly Fern - *Cyrtomium falcatum*

Semi-evergreen fern with thick shiny fronds. Undersides of fronds are covered with spores. Plant in shady areas with fertile soil. In most winters remains evergreen. Protect from direct sun or hot summer winds. Large mature clumps may be divided. Light: Part Shade/Shade Height: 24" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Candytuft - *Iberis sempervirens*

A hardy, low-growing, evergreen plant that is covered with small white flowers February to April. Good in planters, borders, foundation plantings, and rock gardens. Height:6-12" Soil: Well Drained

Hosta 'Royal Standard' - *Hosta plantaginea*

One of the finest Hostas. This vigorous Hosta hybrid has shiny leaves and white fragrant flowers. Makes an impressive large clump. Blooms: Spring-Summer Light: Part Shade/Shade Height: 20" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Japanese Climbing Fern - *Lygodium japonicum*

Perennial climbing vine. Needs support to climb on. Adds a wonderful lacy texture. Vigorous grower. Light: Part Shade/Shade Height: 10' Soil: Moist Well Drained

Violet 'Royal Robe' - *Viola odorata*

Sweetly fragrant flowers of deep violet blue in bloom February to May. They grow best in partial shade. Plants are less than six inches high. Can also be used for a ground cover. Very hardy. Soil: Moist Well Drained

Japanese Painted Fern - *Athyrium nipponicum pictum*

Beautiful multicolored fern for shady areas of garden. Likes rich soil with plenty of organic matter. In spring silvery purple fronds emerge and last to first frost. Divide mature clumps every 4 to 5 years. Height: 12-15" Soil: Moist Well Drained

Ajuga 'Bronze Beauty' - *Ajuga reptans*

Ground cover with glossy, deep bronze foliage and violet-blue flowers in late spring. Grows in ground hugging rosettes. Spreads quickly by stolons. Needs afternoon shade.

Hosta 'Honeybells' - Large light green leaves with graceful downward arch. This Hosta has some sun tolerance. Blooms many fragrant white flowers.

Recommended Reading

1. [Encyclopedia of Shade Perennials](#) by W. George Schmid
2. [Perennial Gardens for Texas](#) by Julie Ryan
3. [Landscaping with Perennials](#) by Navas-Finley
4. [Perennial Gardening in Texas](#) by Alan Dean Franz
5. [Perennial Garden Design](#) by Michael King

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