



EARTHWORKS

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS & CONTRACTORS, INC.

Earthworks Top Twenty Shady Perennials



Adiantum pedatum - Maidenhair Fern - A positively elegant native fern that is 18" tall and likes bright, but not direct light, and a well-drained soil. Make it happy and it rewards by spreading underground rhizomes into drifts and patches - a look that's hard to beat in the shade.



Ajuga reptans 'Caitlan's Giant' - Enormous fluted purple leaves and erect spikes of pretty blue flowers rising to 12", grace this newcomer from Jurassic Park. An easily grown groundcover that will choke out weeds is adaptive to most soils and light conditions.



Aruncus aethusifolius - Dwarf Goatsbeard - This 12" dwarf goatsbeard is one of the true gems of the shade garden. It has miniature plumes of creamy white flowers atop deep green finely divided foliage in early summer. It likes shade to partial shade and a moist soil.



Asarum canadense - Wild Ginger - We think this delightful native wild ginger is one of the best shade tolerant ground covers available. It's about 6" tall, and will slowly spread is grown in moist, well-drained, organic soil



Astilbe 'Veronica Klose' - This smaller 10" Astilbe has rich, dark, rose-purple flowers, and is very floriferous. It blooms in August and makes an effective ground cover. It likes light shade, and a rich, evenly moist soil.



Athyrium niponicum 'Pictum' - Japanese Painted Fern - A beauty from the Orient with 24" fronds that blend silvery gray-green with wine red stems. It shows up in early spring to look great with spring bulbs. It likes moist soil and partial shade to full shade.



Cimicifuga racemosa 'Hillside Black Beauty' - This recent introduction has dark purple foliage with narrow spikes of pinkish-white flowers in fall. The foliage mound is about 2' tall, but the flower spikes will reach to 4'-7': Hillside Black Beauty looks great next to yellow hostas.



Dicentra 'Luxuriant' - This small, 15" hybrid Bleedingheart has arching sprays of deep pink, heart-shaped flowers that start in June and continue until October. The finely divided foliage is bluish green and very attractive. 'Luxuriant' prefers moist soils in shade to partial shade.

Dicentra spectabilis - Bleeding Heart - The classis your Grandma had in her shade garden - it remains a favorite to this day; and for good reason: When the familiar pink and white, heart-shaped flowers appear in early May, you KNOW spring has come at last. There's a lovely white version too.



Epimedium x *rubrum* - Barrenwort - This 10" hybrid species has rich ruby-red flowers tinged with yellow, and make a wonderful, slow spreading ground cover in dry shade. The small heart-shaped foliage is tinged with red, and very attractive. Best growth occurs in rich, moist soils.



Heuchera - Coral Bells - This North American genus is hot stuff in the hort world these days - lots of new foliage types in different colors/texture combos: Pewters, ruffles, marbled leaves, along with long lasting flowers held above the foliage. They're adaptable to most situations, which make them even more valuable. They prefer partial shade and most, well-drained soil. We have several varieties to check out.



Hosta - We won't pick a certain variety here - suffice to say that hostas are certainly among the finest shade tolerant perennials we can use in our garden. We have lots of foliage colors, patterns, sizes, shapes, textures, and flower color/fragrances to choose from. Hostas like a moist location for best growth, but are surprisingly drought tolerant.



Lamium maculatum 'White Nancy' - Attractive silvery-white leaves that are edged with green, and pure white flowers in June-July make this 8" cultivar a great spreading ground cover for dry shade. Nancy will tolerate poor soils and a range of light conditions.



Polygonatum odoratum 'Variegatum' - Variegated Solomon's Seal - This 2-3 ft. Japanese native has green leaves edged in creamy white, with fragrant, white flowers that hang down from maroon tinted stems, followed by blue-black berries. Given a shady spot with moist soil, it will slowly spread.



Pulmonaria - Lungwort – no specific cultivar here - lots of great choices! This Genus has some very fine spring blooming shady perennials. Most have silvery variegations of some kind that help brighten up shady areas, along with mostly blue flowers. Great with Daffodils and other spring bulbs. Prefers rich, well-drained soil with light shade.



Thalictrum r. 'Lavender Mist' – Meadow Rues have a delicate, fine-textured look, making it a great foil for bold foliage plants. Lavender Mist has lavender flowers on purple stems, with yellow stamens for contrast. The foliage on this tall, 4-6 ft. aristocrat, is blue-green and columbine-like. They like rich, moist soil, partial shade – but they aren't too fussy.



Tiarella cordifolia – Foamflower – This is a lovely, native, woodland plant, with creamy-white, wispy, spike-like flowers atop maple-like foliage with prominent veins. It's a great choice for massing – especially beneath trees and larger shrubs. They mix well with other shade lovers too – in a cool, moist spot.



Tricyrtis 'White Towers' – Toad Lily – Tiny orchids come to mind when you first see Toad Lily flowers. White Towers has white flowers on 2 ft. arching stems, and starts to bloom in early fall, giving the shade garden a needed boost. Plant where you can see the small, exquisite flowers, in rich, moist soil.



Viola 'Purple Showers' – Purple Showers has deep green, glossy leaves that form a spreading mound of foliage. It's purple flowers bloom heavily from spring through the summer. This violet is 6" tall and likes a lightly shaded, evenly moist location.



Waldsteinia ternata– Barren Strawberry – This glossy semi-evergreen groundcover with distinctive 3-5" lobed leaves, is covered with yellow flowers in early spring. It's under utilized as a drought tolerant, weed smothering, groundcover in shaded cover.