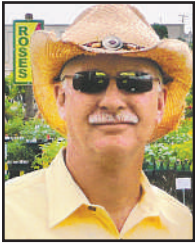


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Made for Shade

By Joe Covington

Many of us live in homes that are blessed with the cooling canopy of large trees and lots of shady spaces. For folks who have yards with morning sun to full shade, you'll be happy to know there are some really neat shade loving plants available which will provide gorgeous color, texture, and interest to your gardens.

First of all, you can't have a shade landscape without Japanese Maples! There's just nothing prettier and that comes in so many different size and color possibilities. Plus, they can be planted close to your house, outdoor living area, pool or patio, without being invasive.

There are several evergreen shrubs that thrive in shade: Aucuba will brighten any area with its bold yellow and green foliage; Aralia has shiny fan-like green leaves and a tropical look; upright and spreading Yews offer a totally different look with their dark green short, flat needles; and dwarf variegated Pittosporum is creamy white and soft green with a round compact growth habit. Soft Caress Mahonia is a newer introduction with lacey tropical texture and yellow blooms.

Hydrangeas, azaleas, camellias and gardenias are beautiful flowering shrubs that do best with a little morning sun or filtered light. Each is available in many lovely varieties and several are repeat bloomers.

Ferns, hostas, oxalis, and columbine have long been perennial favorites that add lush beauty to shade gardens. Heuchera (coral bells) is another highly desired perennial due to its wide array of foliage colors in shades of burgundy, silver, green, red and orange. Low growing groundcovers such as ajuga, dwarf mondo grass, lamium, vinca minor, and various ivies can also add interest in low light areas.

Shade loving annuals are among the prettiest: impatiens, green-leaf begonias, caladiums, and coleus can provide a festive or tranquil display depending on the color palette you use.

You've got lots of choices, so enjoy your cool shade garden...you'll be the envy of all your friends and neighbors who are baking in the full sun this summer.

Joe Covington is the owner of Covington's Nursery & Landscape Co. at 5518 President George Bush Hwy @ SH66 in Rowlett.

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