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## 5 Perennials For Shade Gardens

By Lee Dobbins

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We all know that flowers love sunshine, but did you realize that there are perennials that love the shade?

You can create a beautiful garden in the shade that can act as a cooling retreat on those hot summer days. By using perennials, your flowers will come up year after year for a lifetime of enjoyment.

Shade gardens offer much more than gardens that sit in the blazing sun all day. You can actually sit in them and enjoy them. Pull up a nice lounge chair or have a beautiful granite bench installed. Sit and read on a hot day, or just sip a drink and enjoy the birds and butterflies.

Like any other garden the best shade gardens will have taller plants in the back against the house or woods, medium growing plants in the middle and the shorter or ground cover plants on the inner edge. Since most perennials bloom for a short time, you `ll want to plant them so that you always have color in the garden. Stage the planting so that each area has a blooming plant at all times of the season.

Here's a list of some perennials that thrive in the shade:

Astibe – This plant comes in 3 "sizes" which grow to 20", 30" and 40" in a variety of colors. You can make a whole garden just with this 1 flower! It looks best planted in groups and has clumps of fluffy flower spikes.

Foxglove – This is a great plant for the back row of the garden as it can grow to 5 feet tall. It comes in a variety of colors and has large spikes filled with bell shaped flowers. This beautiful flower is highly toxic if ingested so be careful with it around animals and small children.

Lily Of The valley – This wonderfully fragrant plant has dainty white bell shaped flowers. It is great for a ground cover or the front of the garden as it grows to only about 6" tall.

Lousiana Iris – This beautiful velvety purple black flower produces 4" blooms that last well into June. Plant in groups for best effect. Grows about 2 feet tall.

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Virginia Blue Bells – This medium sized plant has lavender bell shaped clusters. It grows to about 2 feet in height and is very hardy and easy to grow despite it's fragile appearance.

Lee Dobbins is a contributing writer for

[backyard-garden-and-patio.com](http://backyard-garden-and-patio.com)

where you can find out more

about building your dream garden and growing

garden flowers

### **How To Use Biennials & Perennials In Landscaping Your Garden**

**By Paul Curran**

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##### **Biennials**

Biennials are generally very beautiful plants, with most attractive flowers. They are somewhat more trouble for the gardener, since they keep growing during their first year and do not bloom until the second. Their great advantage is that their seeding stage produces new plants which will bloom again two years later, making it unnecessary to plant additional seeds.

The biennials are usually planted in early summer and transplanted to good soil when they are large enough to handle. It is a good idea to pot them at this time, particularly in areas where plants cannot be left outdoors all winter. In some cases, they can be transplanted to a coldframe, and then placed in the flower bed the following spring. The requirements of careful soil preparation apply to biennials as well as annuals.

After planting, if you want a continuous new growth of plants, it is best not to weed and cultivate too assiduously. If a really fastidious biennial patch is planted, it will be necessary to replace the plants with new ones each year.

##### **Perennials**

Perennials are the basic flowers of any garden. Each year they die and renew themselves for the next growing season.

## 5 Perennials For Shade Gardens

They are long-lived and last for many seasons. Perennials are also, historically, among our oldest plants. They have been cultivated for centuries and often, as a result of breeding and crossbreeding, bear no resemblance to their wild forebears. In some of the perennials, the blossoms have become so specialized through centuries of cultivation that they no longer grow 'seeds.

Other perennials are continually being developed by amateur botanists and gardeners. As a result of this cultivation and inbreeding, perennials as a rule are not as hardy as other varieties. Another disadvantage is the tendency of certain perennials to die down after flowering, thereby leaving gaps in the garden.

There are a number of ways to solve the problems of short-flowering periods and the resultant unsightly spaces. One way is to intersperse perennials with annuals and other bulbs and flowering plants whose bloom occurs either later or earlier than that of the perennials. Some perennials are easy to transplant: chrysanthemums, for example, can be moved from one place to another with no noticeable effect on their vigor.

This is another way to keep color and bloom throughout the growing season. A garden of perennials, either by themselves or mixed with annuals and other bulbs, should be placed along a path, or as a border, with a background of trees, shrubs, a wall or fence.

The background shows the brilliant coloring to best advantage. Some varieties can flourish in the shade, such as anemone, lily of the valley, day lilies, sweet pea, primrose, hollyhock, harebell and peonies, but these flowers must be chosen carefully and faced so that some sun reaches them every day.

Paul Curran is CEO of Cuzcom Internet Publishing Group and webmaster at [Trees-and-Bushes.com](http://Trees-and-Bushes.com), providing access to their nursery supplier of a range of quality plants, trees, bushes, shrubs, seeds and garden products.

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