



Perennials for Specific Habitats

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Choosing the right perennials for the right place (hardiness, light, soil type/moisture) results in a more sustainable and successful landscape. The following environmental habitats are common in gardens, with 10 common perennials suitable for each, including some more difficult sites. Keep in mind that:

- Moist or dry extremes exist for each
- Light needs vary with region and temperature. A plant (such as hosta) may require shade in the South, but tolerate sun in North.
- Light tolerance varies with moisture. Shade plants (such as Astilbe) may take sun if there is enough moisture.

Other specific garden habitats such as water edges and water are not covered here.

Shade (compares to the natural woodland habitat), under 4 hours sun per day

- humus soil--high organic matter
- tree root competition, usually dry soil
- evergreens: year round shade
- deciduous: shade in summer; light in spring promotes wildflowers, bulbs

Perennials for Shade

Ajuga (Bugleweed)

Asarum europaeum (European Ginger)

Athyrium (Painted, Lady ferns)--moist

Brunnera (Siberian Bugloss)

Helleborus (Hellebore)

Hosta (Funkia, Plantain Lily)

Lamium (Dead Nettle)

Pachysandra (Spurge)

Pulmonaria (Lungwort)--moist

Tiarella (Foamflower)

Part Shade (compares to the natural woodland edge habitat), 4-8 hours of sun per day

- transition between sun/lawns and shade/woodlands
- some root competition
- shade plants, groundcovers

Perennials for Part Shade

Aquilegia (Columbine)

Astilbe --moist

Cimicifuga (Bugbane)—moist

Geranium maculatum (Perennial Geranium)

Hosta (Funkia, Plantain Lily)

Heuchera (Coralbells)

Phlox divaricata

Polemonium (Jacob's Ladder)

Sanguisorba (Burnet)--moist

Tricyrtis (Toad Lily)

Sun (compares to natural meadows, prairies), over 8 hours of sun per day

- often need to add organic matter in garden habitats
- often open so exposed, windy (staking?)
- sloping or flat; slopes alter hardiness, moisture
- often in/near lawns--beds and borders (people and pet pressure?)
- many choices

Perennials for Soggy Sun

Astilbe

Camassia (Quamash, bulb)

Carex (sedges)

Chelone (Turtlehead)

Eupatorium (Joe Pye Weed)

Iris pseudacorus 'Variegata' (Iris)

Lobelia siphilitica (Blue Lobelia)

Lysimachia punctata 'Alexander' (Loosestrife)

Physostegia virginiana 'Miss Manners' (Obedient Plant)

Primula (primroses)

Perennials for Dry Sun

Allium (ornamental onions)

Armeria maritima (Sea Thrift)

Dianthus (Pinks)

Gypsophila repens (Creeping Baby's Breath)

Hemerocallis (daylilies)

Lilium (lilies)

Nepeta (Catmint)

Pennisetum (Fountain Grass)

Sedum (Sedum)

Thymus (Thyme)

Perennials for both extremes

Aster (various Asters)

Baptisia (False Indigo)

Echinacea (Coneflowers)

Iris sibirica (Siberian Iris)

Monarda (Bee Balm)

Ornamental grasses (many)

Geranium sanguineum (Perennial Geranium)

Rudbeckia (Black-eyed Susan)

Solidago (Goldenrod)

Veronicastrum (Culver's Root)

Containers

- pots, barrel halves, raised beds, walls, roofs
- plant root growth may be limited
- soil extremes (temperature, moisture)
- very different "soil" from ground beds
- dwarf, creeping plants, even a place for root invasives

Perennials for Containers

Ajuga (Bugleweed)

Alchemilla mollis (Lady's Mantle)

Coreopsis verticillata (Threadleaf Coreopsis)

Helleborus (Hellebore, Lenten Rose)

Heuchera (Coralbells)

Hosta (dwarf cultivars)

Lamium (Dead Nettle)

Lysimachia nummularia 'Aurea' (Creeping Jenny)

Pennisetum (Fountain Grass)

Vinca minor (Perennial Periwinkle)