

## PLANTING & MAINTENANCE

- Consider how tall the plants will grow - you don't want tall plants swamping small ones.
- Think about flowering times and the colour and shape of leaves. Aim to create year-round colour and texture - across the site.
- Do not plant when soil is very dry, waterlogged or frozen.
- Soil is easiest to dig in autumn, so put a date in your diary for next year! Then, instead of digging in compost or manure, you can spread it evenly over the soil. It will break down naturally over winter and worms will incorporate it into your soil.
- Water plants thoroughly before and after planting; ensure they don't dry out, especially when they are getting established.
- After planting, sprinkle a general fertiliser such as Growmore or bonemeal lightly around the plants and water again well.
- Plants on dry soils will benefit from a mulch of garden compost, spent mushroom compost, cocoa shell or gravel to help cool the soil and protect the

roots in winter. Keep mulch away from the base of the plant.

- For further planting information see our leaflets on *Bedding plants*, *Growing perennials*, *Bulbs* and *Shrubs*.

### LOOKING AFTER YOUR PLANTS

- Ensure plants don't dry out in the first year. Water plants thoroughly from time to time rather than little and often. Avoid the heat of the day.
- Sprinkle soil mixed with fertiliser around plants each spring.
- Snip off dead flower heads regularly to promote regrowth.
- In shady areas, paint walls or fences in white or light colours to promote light and growth.
- Snails thrive in damp shade and often breed in loose masonry. Removing piles of bricks and pointing up loose brickwork will reduce the problem. Control with a slug and snail remedy available from your garden centre or nursery, or leave out a saucer of beer so they fall into a drunken stupor!

## WINTER INTEREST

- In sunny spots, create winter colour with evergreens such as conifers, lavender, bay and rosemary, grasses and bedding plants such as polyanthus, primroses and winter pansies (below left).
- In shady corners, snowdrops, hardy cyclamen, winter aconites and evergreens such as holly, ivy, box and yew will provide winter interest.



## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Fork & spade  
Trowel  
Hoe  
Watering can or hose  
Planting compost  
or well-rotted manure  
Cocoa shells/gravel/bark  
Water-retaining gel  
granules (for dry soils)

Bonemeal (when planting  
in autumn or winter)  
Growmore (when planting  
in spring or summer)  
Sun or shade-loving plants

• For more information:  
[www.rhs.org.uk/advice](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice)  
[www.plantforlife.info](http://www.plantforlife.info)

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## CHOOSING PLANTS FOR

# SUN & SHADE



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## SUNNY SPOTS & SHADY CORNERS

Just like people, some plants love sun while others flourish in cooler, shadier conditions. Most gardens have a combination of sunny spots and shady corners, so choose your plants carefully to make the most of the different areas in your garden.

Many sun-loving plants have thick, silvery coloured leaves with hairs to reduce water loss. Numerous flowers are well suited to a dry, sunny site, giving you the opportunity to create all kinds of dazzling displays. And don't forget to select a few varieties that release scent for those warm summer evenings.

Similarly, you shouldn't be daunted by shade - it provides a wonderful opportunity to grow many marvellous plants. While some varieties do not flower well in shade, many plants originate from woodland, so you can create fascinating effects with foliage. And if your bed is shaded by overhanging deciduous trees, try using bulbs to create colour in spring before the trees come into leaf.

Whichever plants you choose, making the most of your sunny spots and shady corners is easy and needn't take long - and you'll enjoy seeing all parts of your garden thriving with plants that suit the conditions.

## PREPARING THE SITE

### PREPARATION TIME: 30 MINS

It's not hard to create the right conditions for plants to flourish, although obviously it takes a little longer to prepare the ground for a large bed than a tiny corner. Ideally, soil should be about 60cm deep and loosely packed for plant roots to penetrate.

Whether you're planting in sunny or shady conditions, there are similar rules to follow for ground preparation:

- Weed thoroughly and use a hoe to save time and effort.
- Dig over with a fork, especially if your soil feels heavy, as it needs loosening up before planting.
- To help retain moisture and improve heavy soils, add plenty of organic material, such as well-rotted manure, garden compost or planting compost.
- Add water-retaining gel granules to very dry soils to help retain moisture.
- To create more light in shady spots, cut back selected branches of overhanging trees.



## SUNNY SPOTS

For sunny spots, combine a mixture of shrubs, herbaceous perennials (plants that usually die back in winter and grow again the following year) and bedding plants. Lavenders are perfect for sunny, dry conditions; Oriental poppies add a splash of colour; and annual bedding plants such as begonias, lobelia and alyssum are great for the front of a flowerbed. It's especially easy (not to mention cost effective) to grow plants from seed on a sunny site.

### PLANTS FOR SUNNY SPOTS

- *Allium* (ornamental onion) (pictured): purple globes in summer followed by seedheads. 1.5m
- *Anthemis*: aromatic foliage and yellow or white daisy flowers.
- *Aster novi-belgii* (Michaelmas daisy): late summer. 15cm-1.2m
- *Aubrieta*: low-growing mats of pink and mauve flowers.
- *Caryopteris*: small shrubs with many fluffy blue flowers. 1m
- *Cistus x purpureus* (rock rose): bright rose-pink summer flowers with evergreen foliage. 1.5m
- *Dianthus* (pink) (pictured): pink, white or red summer flowers, often patterned, silvery leaves. 25-45cm
- *Euphorbia characias* (spurge): evergreen, elegant spikes. 1.5m
- *Fritillaria imperialis* (crown imperial) (pictured): orange, red or yellow flowers in early summer. 1.5m
- *Genista* (broom): small-leaved, yellow-flowered shrub. 60cm
- *Helianthemum* (rock rose): many colours, evergreen. 10-20cm
- *Lavandula* (lavender): blue, pink, mauve or white spikes, silvery, aromatic foliage. 45cm
- *Lavatera* 'Barnsley' (mallow): silver-pink flower spikes in summer, pale evergreen foliage. 1.75m
- *Penstemon*: blooms all summer in a range of colours. 20-60cm
- *Potentilla* (cinquefoil) (pictured): colourful, late-blooming flowers. 15-45cm
- *Rosa* 'Golden Showers': climber, fragrant flowers all summer, glossy green foliage. 3 x 2.5m



## SHADY CORNERS

In shady corners, mix shrubs, herbaceous perennials, ferns and bulbs. Damp shady areas are ideal for ferns and lush woodland plants such as wood anemones, primroses and trilliums. However, shady sites beneath hedges and trees are often dry and more suitable for bulbs such as bluebells and snowdrops, shrubs such as daphne or mahonia, perennials including bergenia or hellebores and woodland plants such as foxgloves and epimediums.

### PLANTS FOR DAMP SHADY SITES

- *Alchemilla mollis* (lady's mantle): leafy perennial with acid-yellow flowers in summer. 5-60cm
- *Anemone nemorosa* (wood anemone) (pictured): creeping perennial with white spring flowers. 8-15cm
- *Astilbe* (false goat's beard): perennial with red, pink or white plumes in summer. 30-60cm
- *Athyrium felix-femina* (lady fern): finely divided green fronds. 30cm
- *Cyclamen coum*: compact bulb with white, pink or red flowers in winter/early spring. 5-8cm
- *Hosta* (plantain lily): perennial with fine foliage and purple/white flower spikes in summer. 15-90cm

- *Hydrangea* (lace-cap types): shrubs with pink, white or blue flowers in summer. 1.2-1.8m
- *Primula*: Candelabra and Polyanthus perennial types.
- *Trillium* (wood lily): spring-flowering, three-leaved perennials. 13-60cm



### PLANTS FOR DRY SHADY CORNERS

- *Bergenia*: perennial with pink or white spring flowers and glossy, evergreen leaves. 30cm
- *Daphne odora*: shrub with purple, pink and white fragrant flowers in Jan-April. 1.5m
- *Digitalis* (foxglove): flower spikes in various shades. 70cm-1.5m
- *Epimedium*: dainty spring-summer flowers and fine foliage. 30cm
- *Galanthus* (snowdrop): bulb, white flowers in early spring.
- *Helleborus* (pictured): perennial, long-lasting winter & spring flowers.
- *Heuchera* (coral flower): perennial with bold foliage and white-pink summer flower spikes. 45-90cm
- *Lamium* (dead nettle): perennial with decorative foliage. 15-60cm
- *Mahonia*: evergreen shrub with scented winter flowers. 1-5m
- *Pachysandra*: low, spreading,

- bushy evergreen perennial. 20cm
- *Pulmonaria* (lungwort): perennial with pink, blue or white flowers in spring; green or white-splashed leaves. 30cm
- *Sarcococca confusa* (Christmas box): winter-flowering evergreen shrub; very fragrant. 90-120cm
- *Skimmia japonica*: autumn-winter-flowering shrub. 1.5m
- *Vinca* (periwinkle): low-growing evergreen with purple flowers.

