

North Florida Landscape Plants for Shaded Sites¹

Frank Regulski, Jr. and David Marshall²

Most areas of north Florida have environmental conditions which enable many ornamental plant species to thrive. These plants can normally be used by homeowner in a wide variety of locations or situations with little problem. However, a number of areas will have planting problems if plant selection is not done carefully. One of these problem areas is the shady site.

All plants need light to grow and develop. Light intensity and duration have a marked effect on plant and leaf size, color, shape, foliage density and amount of flowering. Some plants have certain requirements of light intensity and duration while others are tolerant of a wide range of light conditions.

Most plants can be categorized as requiring one of three levels of light — full sun, partial shade and full shade. These levels are based on the number of hours of sunlight the plant needs for proper growth and development. Full sun is normally considered to be sun exposure from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., plants in partial shade would receive direct sun from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., and plants in full shade would receive no direct sunlight. Most plants do very nicely in a partial shade situation. However, in full shade

many plants develop a spindly, thin shape and will not flower normally. Not only does shade duration have to be considered but also shade intensity. A light shade would be provided by pines or other tall, high-canopied trees. Most plants will thrive under these conditions but if the shade is dense, special care in planting definitely should be exercised. In these situations plants should be selected which have adapted in nature to these shade combinations.

Occasionally, shade is combined with wet site conditions. In this situation a plant must be chosen which can cope with both conditions. Table 1 lists shrubs and trees are well adapted for shade or shade and wet sites in the north Florida landscape.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Barrick, W.E. and R.J. Black. "Landscape Trees for Energy Conservation: North Florida Trees." Florida Cooperative Extension Service *Circular EES-1*.

Barrick, W.E., D.L. Ingram, and J.T. Midcap. "Selected Shrubs for North Florida." Florida Cooperative Extension Service *Circular 500*.

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Table 1. North Florida Landscape Plants for
Shaded Sites

Table 1.

<i>Scientific Name</i>	Common Name	Wet Site Tolerant	Size	Comments
PARTIAL SHADE				
Evergreen Shrubs				
<i>Abelia x grandiflora</i>	Glossy Abelia	Marginal	6-10'prime; ;	Durable shrub; white flowers; good hedge plant
<i>Berberis julianae</i>	Wintergreen Barberry	Marginal	5-6'prime;	Attractive plant; has thorns; dwarf available
<i>Buxus</i> spp.	Boxwood	No	3-12'prime; ;	Good hedge plant, but pest problems common
<i>Camellia</i> spp.	Camellia	No	10-12'prime; ;	Attractive fall- and winter-flowering plant, various colors
<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>	European fan palm	No	10-12'prime; ;	Attractive shrub-like palm
<i>Elaeagnus pungens</i>	Silverthorn	Yes	8-12'prime; ;	Durable screen plant; fragrant flowers
<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Loquat	No	20-25'prime; ;	Coarse texture; edible fruit; susceptible to fire blight
<i>Euonymus</i> spp.	Euonymus	Yes	1-8'prime;	Durable variegated cultivars available
<i>Feijoa sellowiana</i>	Pineapple Guava	No	8-10'prime; ;	Durable screen plant; edible fruit
<i>Gardenia jasminoides</i>	Gardenia	No	5-6'prime;	Glossy green leaves, fragrant flowers
<i>Ilex</i> spp.	Hollies	No	2-50'prime; ;	Durable attractive plants; specimen, foundation, or screen plant, depending on species

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Scientific Name	Common Name	Wet Site Tolerant	Size	Comments
<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander	Yes	5-15' ;	Yellow, red, pink or white summer flowers; all parts poisonous if eaten
<i>Photinia serrulata</i>	Chinese Photinia	No	15-20' ;	Effective as hedge or small tree
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>	Cherry-laurel	No	20-25' ;	Can be a pest by birds spreading seed
<i>Raphiolepis indica</i>	Indian-Hawthorn	No	5-6' ;	White or pink spring flowers
<i>Yucca</i> spp.	Yucca	No	3-15' ;	Extremely sharp, stiff leaves
Ground Covers				
<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Carpet Bugle	No	6"	Will not tolerate any foot traffic; purplish-green foliage
<i>Euonymus fortunei</i>	Creeping Euonymus	No	1-2' ;	Several pest problems
Deciduous Shrubs				
<i>Euonymus fortunei</i>	Burning Bush	Yes	6-8' ;	Brilliant fall color
<i>Franklinia alatamaha</i>	Franklinia	Yes	20-30' ;	Late summer white flowers
<i>Jasminum nudiflorum</i>	Winter Jasmine	Marginal	3-4' ;	Arching branches; yellow flowers in early spring
<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>	Winter Honeysuckle	Yes	6-8' ;	Small, very fragrant spring flowers; good deciduous hedge plant
<i>Lonicera tartarica</i>	Tartarian Honeysuckle	Yes	8-10' ;	Pink to white flowers in spring
Deciduous Trees				

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Scientific Name	Common Name	Wet Site Tolerant	Size	Comments
<i>Betula nigra</i>	River Birch	Yes	50-60'prime ;	Attractive bark; yellow fall color; fast grower
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	American Hornbeam	No	25-35'prime ;	Steel-gray bark
<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	Fringetree	No	20-25'prime ;	Spectacular white flowers in spring
<i>Diospyros kaki</i>	Oriental Persimmon	No	20-30'prime ;	Showy, edible fruit; orange-red fall color
<i>Fagus grandiflora</i>	American Beech	No	60-80'prime ;	Attractive bark; slow grower
<i>Halesia diptera</i>	Two-winged Silverbell	No	20-25'prime ;	Delicate white spring flowers
<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>	Cucumber Magnolia	No	60-80'prime ;	Large coarse foliage
<i>Magnolia soulangiana</i>	Saucer Magnolia	No	20-25'prime ;	White to pink to purplish early spring flowers
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Black Gum	Yes	60-100'prime ;	Orange-red fall color
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Eastern Hophornbeam	No	20-50'prime ;	Rugged small tree
<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	Sourwood	No	25-30'prime ;	Beautiful scarlet fall color
<i>Tilia americana</i>	American Linden	Yes	40-80'prime ;	Fragrant flowers; bright yellow fall color

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<i>Ulmus americana</i>	Americana Elm	Yes	60-100′e;	Dutch Elm disease not serious problem in Florida
<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	Lacebark Elm	Yes	40-60′ ;	Attractive bark; good shape
Broadleaf Evergreen Trees				
<i>Butia capitata</i>	Pindo Palm	Yes	10-20′ ;	Orange, edible fruit
<i>Quercus laurifolia</i>	Laurel Oak	Yes	80-100′e;	Rapid growth; not durable
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Live Oak	Yes	40-80′ ;	Long-lived, attractive form
SHADE				
Evergreen Shrubs				
<i>Agarista populifolia</i>	Florida leucothoe	Yes	8-10′ ;	Native. Arching growth habit
<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	Aucuba	No	4-12′ ;	Attractive coarse-textured leaves; several varieties, including variegated
<i>Bambusa</i> spp.	Bamboo	Yes	2-30′ ;	Can be pest depending on species
<i>Cephalotaxus harringtonia</i>	Japanese Plum-Yew	No	5-6′ ;	Slow grower; good for northern exposure
<i>Fatsia japonica</i>	Fatsia	Yes	5-6′ ;	Large unusual leaves
Evergreen Shrubs (continued)				

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Scientific Name	Common Name	Wet Site Tolerant	Size	Comments
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	Mountain Laurel	No	4-6'prime;	White to rose flowers, native shrub
<i>Ligustrum</i> spp.	Ligustrum	Yes	6-12'prime ;	Most are durable, fast-growing plants
<i>Mahonia</i> spp.	Mahonia	No	4-12'prime ;	Varying foliage textures; some have showy berries
<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	Southern Wax-Mirtle	Yes	12-15'prime ;	Attractive bark; tendency to develop multiple stems
<i>Nandina domestica</i>	Nandina	No	5-6'prime;	Lacy foliage; bright red leaves in winter; dwarf cultivars available
<i>Osmanthus</i> spp.	Osmanthus	Yes	8-15'prime ;	Very fragrant fall flowers on 'fragrans'
<i>Pittosporum tobira</i>	Pittosporum	No	8-10'prime ;	Variegation, dwarf cultivars available
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> 'Zabeliana'	Dwarf Cherry-Laurel	No	5-6'prime;	Spreading growth habit
<i>Rhapidophyllum hystrix</i>	Needle Palm	Yes	4-8'prime;	Durable palm
<i>Rhododendron</i> spp.	Azalea	No	2-12'prime ;	Many colors of spring to early summer flowers
<i>Taxus floridiana</i>	Florida Yew	No	8-10'prime ;	Rare native with dark green needle foliage
<i>Cleyera japonica</i>	Cleyera	No	15-20'prime ;	Unique reddish foliage in winter
<i>Trachycarpus fortunei</i>	Windmill Palm	Yes	6-20'prime ;	Very showy small palm

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Scientific Name	Common Name	Wet Site Tolerant	Size	Comments
<i>Vaccinium arboreum</i>	Tree Sparkleberry	Yes	20-25'prime;	Fragrant, white spring flowers
<i>Viburnum</i> spp.	Viburnum	No	6-20'prime;	Good hedge plants
Ground Covers				
<i>Aspidistra elatior</i>	Cast Iron Plant	Yes	1-2'prime;	Durable plant with glossy, dark green leaves
<i>Dichondra carolinensis</i>	Dichondra	Yes	2'Prime;	Small round leaves, considered a weed in lawns
<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Carolina Yellow Jessamine	Yes	2'Prime;	Bright yellow spring flowers; grows upward, making use as groundcover limited
<i>Hedera canariensis</i>	Algerian Ivy	Yes	6'Prime;	Larger leaves than English Ivy
<i>Hedera helix</i>	English Ivy	Yes	6'Prime;	Rapid-growing ground cover
<i>Hosta</i> spp.	Plantain Lily	Yes	12-18'Prime;	Fragrant showy white, blue, or lilac flowers
Ground Covers				
<i>Liriope</i> spp.	Liriope	Yes	1'prime;	Will tolerate no foot traffic; lilac to white flowers; variegated forms available
<i>Mitchella repens</i>	Partridgeberry	Yes	1-2'Prime;	Requires acidic soil; sensitive to traffic
<i>Ophiopogon japonicus</i>	Mondo Grass	Yes	1'prime;	Finer texture than liriope, but similar
<i>Selaginella involvens</i>	Erect Selaginella	Yes	1'prime;	---

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<i>Trachelospermum asiaticum</i>	Japanese Star Jasmine	Yes	1′	Non-climbing vining groundcover with fine texture
<i>Trachelospermum jasminoides</i>	Confederate Jasmine	Yes	1′	Very fragrant spring flowers; will climb
<i>Vinca major</i>	Big Leaf Periwinkle	Yes	1′	Blue flowers; does not climb
Deciduous Shrubs				
<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Beautyberry	No	5-6′	Purplish fruit in late summer
<i>Calicanthus floridus</i>	Sweetshrub	No	4-8″	Known more for fragrant flowers than appearance
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Witch-Hazel	Yes	12-15′ ;	Yellow flowers in late fall
<i>Hydrangea quercifolia</i>	Oakleaf Hydrangea	Yes	5-6″	White flowers in early summer; red-orange fall foliage
<i>Ilex decidua</i>	Deciduous Holly	Yes	15-20′ ;	Orange to scarlet berries in fall and winter
Evergreen Vines				
<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Japanese Honeysuckle	Yes		Very fragrant flowers all summer
<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Trumpet Honeysuckle	Yes		Red or yellow flowers, not fragrant
Deciduous Vines				
<i>Clematis</i> spp.	Clematis	No		Beautiful summer flowers. Red, purple, or white.
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Virginia Creeper	Yes		Bright red fall foliage
<i>Wisteria</i> spp.	Chinese Wisteria	Yes	Var.	Blue or white fragrant spring flowers; can become weed if gets out of control

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<i>Scientific Name</i>	Common Name	Wet Site Tolerant	Size	Comments
Deciduous Trees				
<i>Acer palmatum</i>	Japanese Maple	No	15-20'prime ;	Good purple leaf color; several varieties
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Rep Maple	Yes	50-80'prime ;	Good spring and excellent fall color (orange and red); fast grower
<i>Aesculus pavia</i>	Red Buckeye	Yes	15-20'prime ;	Showy bark; yellow fall color
<i>Cornus florida</i>	Flowering Dogwood	No	20-30'prime ;	White or pinkish flowers; orange-red fall color
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Eastern Hophornbeam	No	20-50'prime ;	Shaggy bark; durable, slow-growing tree
Broadleaf Evergreen Trees				
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Southern Magnolia	Yes	60-100'prime ;	Coarse leaf texture; white flowers
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Sweetbay	Yes	50-60'prime ;	White flowers, silvery leaf undersides
Needle Evergreen Trees				
<i>Cunninghamia lanceolata</i>	China Fir	No	30-50'prime ;	Prickly foliage; few pests
<i>Pinus glabra</i>	Spruce Pine	Yes	60-80'prime ;	Very attractive pine
<i>Podocarpus</i> spp.	Podocarpus	No	20-25'prime ;	Good screen plant; tolerates pruning