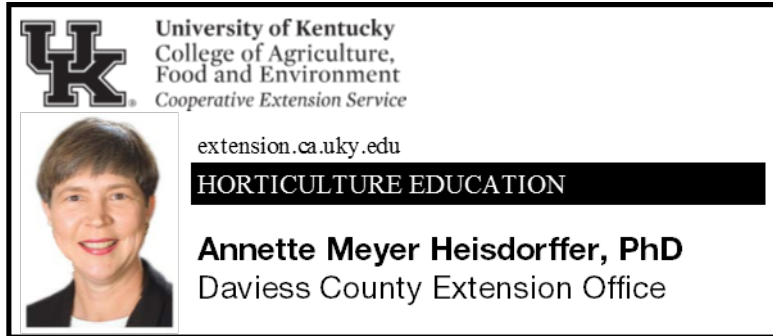


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Annuals and Perennials to Grow in Shaded Gardens

What grows in the shade besides hostas? Before avoiding hostas, consider the diversity within the hostas which includes plant size and leaf shape and color. However, there are additional annuals and perennials available to grow in the shade. Even if shade is not available from trees, use the shade created by buildings or the house on the north or east side. Several plants to consider are listed below.

Hostas grow best in fully shaded or partially shaded locations. Sites receiving morning sun and afternoon shade are fine. If grown in hot, sunny areas, the leaves of many hostas may scorch.

The leaves of the hosta originate from a crown in a rosette and form layers in a mound shape. Depending on the cultivar, the mounds may range from 6 inches to 3 feet tall. The spread may range from 8 inches to 5 feet wide.

Hostas tolerate a variety of soil conditions including soils with clay. Well-drained soil high in organic matter which holds moisture is best. The addition of organic matter, such as compost, improves the soil and creates better growing conditions.

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Depending on the cultivar, hostas bloom in June, July, August, or September. In addition, some blossoms may be fragrant. Since hostas are grown more for their foliage than the flowers, many gardeners remove the flower spikes before they bloom.

Lungwort (*Pulmonaria*) is a popular perennial for the shade with attractively spotted leaves. The funnel-shaped, drooping flowers of the lungwort appear in early spring, so check them frequently to avoid missing them. The flower buds are a shade of pink which opens into a shade of blue. Some cultivars may only have white or coral-red flowers without turning to blue.

After the plants bloom, the leaves create interest for the rest of the year. The irregularly shaped spots are gray to white on a green background. Depending on the cultivar, the plant ranges from 12 to 20 inches in height with an equal spread. Lungwort is a good plant to use in combination with hostas. Lungwort performs best if it has adequate moisture throughout the year.

Wax or fibrous-rooted begonia (*Begonia x semperflorens-cultorum*) is a popular annual used in shady locations. The plant height ranges from 8 to 12 inches.

The foliage color of the wax begonia is available in bronze or green. The green-leaved begonias prefer shade and tolerate a couple of hours of morning sun. The bronze-leaved begonias handle shade, partial shade, and full sun conditions. The bronze foliage makes wax begonia a versatile plant.

The flowers of wax begonia range in size from 0.75 to 2 inches across. Flower colors include white, pink, red, scarlet, rose-pink, salmon, salmon orange, and bicolored. Many flower colors are available with both leaf colors.

Begonia, Dragon Wing™ Red, is a beautiful, vigorous plant that has large, glossy green,

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wing-shaped leaves and large scarlet flowers that droop from the leaves. It grows 12 to 15 inches tall. This plant performs well either in sun or shade in planters, window boxes, hanging baskets, or bedding areas.

New Guinea Impatiens (*Impatiens hawkeri*) have attractive foliage and large flowers. The foliage of this annual may be bronze, dark green, or green with a pretty pattern of yellow color on the leaves. Flower colors include orange, salmon, white, lilac, and shades of pink and red. New Guinea Impatiens will grow in partial shade.

Coleus (*Coleus x hybridus*) can be grown in shade or partial shade. Depending on the cultivar, the sun coleus can be grown in full sun. This annual plant is grown for the effect of the colorful foliage rather than the flowers. Coleus plants are available in different leaf sizes, leaf shapes, and leaf color combinations. The leaf color combinations include yellow, red, bronze, light green, and white. The plant height may range from 10 to 20 inches tall. Coleus also makes a good houseplant. New cultivars are available with a trailing habit.

Astilbe or false spirea (*Astilbe x arendsii*) is a perennial that grows best in partial shade in a moist location. Astilbe will tolerate some sun. The plant height is 2 to 3 feet tall. The finely cut foliage ranges from green to bronze in color. The flower is a plume-like spike. Depending on the cultivar, the flower color is available in pink, white, red, or lavender and blooms in late spring or early summer. The flower spikes can be cut and used in a fresh floral bouquet or dried.

Summer Wave® Large Blue *Torenia* hybrid grows best in the shade to partial shade. The large tubular shaped flowers are two toned with darker blue and lighter blue petals. The carefree annual plant is covered with flowers all summer. The plant reaches 8 to 10 inches tall and 10 to

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12 inches wide. Plant the Summer Wave® in containers or in the ground.

For more information about flowering annuals and perennials for shady locations, contact the Daviess County Cooperative Extension Service Office at (270) 685-8480 or Annette.heisdorffer@uky.edu.

Annette's Tip:

When daffodils (*Narcissus*) become crowded and the number of blooms decrease, they should be divided. The earliest time to divide them is after the foliage has died completely which may be in June. As the daffodils bloom in your landscape, take photos and place a label by them now. It is easy to forget where they are located. They can be divided in July and August too. Remember to allow the foliage to dye back naturally. Do not roll up or rubber band the leaves.

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