Shade plants

Most of the time we are trying to find plants that survive our blazing sun but we all have spots that are a bit too shady for some things, for example the north side of a house or underneath a tree. There are plants that can tolerate the heat but prefer the shade, many of which are suited for a low-water-use garden. I've listed some below but each one varies in its growing requirements. You will need to check if it fits the conditions that you have.

**Bulbine (Bulbine sp.)**—A succulent perennial that grows to 2 feet tall. It has yellow or orange flowers that bloom both in the spring and the fall.

**Butterfly bush (Buddleia sp.)**—A common shrub sold in nurseries in the area. Most people think of it as a sun plant but it can also tolerate some shade.

**Day lilies (Hemerocallis)**—I think day lilies would do better with afternoon shade than in full sun. By this time of year they can be looking a little burned.

**Rain lilies (Zephyranthes grandiflora)**—I love these plants but they are elusive, so don’t expect to fill any empty space. They don’t put out a lot of leaves and they disappear and appear on their own schedule just like the flowers. It’s worth saving a spot for them, though, as when they do bloom, they add some sunshine to the garden.

**Flame anisacanthus (Aniscanthus quadrifidus var. wrightii)**—A great hummingbird plant and it blooms in the hot summer months just when a lot other things may not be. One drawback is that it is prolific in producing seeds which easily germinate. So if you don’t keep after them you might have a forest.

**Arizona grape ivy (Cissus trifoliate)**—A vine that is cold hardy. It is non-invasive. The plant has purple stems and the leaves develop a red tint later in September. The vines can grow to 20 feet but its size depends on the amount of water it gets. One drawback is the leaves may cause skin irritation in some people.

**Desert lavender (Hyptis emoryi)**—A large shrub that can reach 15 to 18 feet tall if left to its own devices. The leaves are whitish gray-green and the flowers are violet blue. It attracts bees, so take that into consideration.
when deciding whether to put it in your yard. This would be a good plant for the Cottonwood, Camp Verde area and other lower elevations (3000 feet and below). It is evergreen but will loose its leaves if the weather gets too cold. It should resprout.

**Blackfoot daisy (Melampodium leucanthem)**—This tough little plant is a desert dweller but can survive down to -20°F. It is a low grower, forming a small mound. The plant blooms in the spring and the fall in lower elevations and in the summer in higher elevations. Make sure the soil is well draining and don’t overwater.

**Penstemons (Penstemon sp)**—These plants are favorites with gardeners and landscapers. It’s hard to resist their tall stalks of blooms. You see them blooming on roadsides in many locations in the county. Most species will grow in both sun and shade.

**Autumn Sage (Salvia greggii)**—A mainstay of desert gardens these days. Where once the only color available was a red, today it comes in a rainbow of colors. Some colors are more heat tolerant than others but maybe a bit of shade would help them.

**Mexican bush sage (Salvia leucantha)**—I love this plant but its drawback in our area is that it freezes at about 20°F. If it isn’t too cold for very long, it may resprout from the roots. You would have to treat it as an annual around here but it might be worth it. It prefers a little shade even in higher elevations.

**Agave parryi**—Again a plant we think of as a sun lover but it will tolerate shade. The agave are beautiful sculptural plants so consider them for your garden.

**Columbine (Aquilegia sp.)**—Who doesn’t know columbine! It is one of our most beautiful garden plants. It won’t grow in the sun around here; it really needs its shade. But there is nothing more beautiful than a group of columbine in bloom. It comes in a variety of colors, everything from yellows, blues, reds and combinations. It also reseeds easily. Once you have plants blooming and setting seed you will have more columbine the next year.

**Gaura (Gaura lindheimeri)**—A beautiful plant that will tolerate shade. If you are looking for something tough as nails but with the look of fairies, this is your plant. The flowers are red, pink or white and float on long stems. The top of the plant may freeze in cold weather but will resprout in the spring.

**Muhly grass (Muhlenberia capillaries [Hairawn muhly, mist grass], lindheimeri [Big muhly] or rigens [deergrass])**—These three grasses will work in both sun and shade. I had an M. rigens for years growing in deep shade that grew vigorously and bloomed every year creating a burst of golden seedheads in a dark space. M. rigens has gold-yellow stalks while M. capillaries comes in shades of red and pink and lindheimeri has silvery seed heads. If you like grasses these would be a good choice in a shady spot.

**Mexican primrose (Oenothera berlandieri)**—There is nothing prettier than a wide swath of these plants in bloom. The plants have big pink flowers that dance on top of the stems. The plus side of these is they are prolific spring bloomers in both sun and shade. The downside is they can be invasive. I like them because they can actually out-compete, to some degree, Bermuda grass— in my yard a small bonus.

**Licorice marigold, Mexican marigold, Texas tarragon (Tagetes lucida)**—A small shrub that produces bright yellow flowers. The leaves have tarragon-like flavor with a hint of anise.

**Pale yucca or pale-leaf yucca (Yucca pallida)**—A trunkless yucca, it forms clumps, making it a good choice for under a tree. The clumps can get quite big but can easily be controlled if you have limited space. The plant has pale blue-green leaves with a light yellow to white stripe on the margin. The white blooms in the summer would brighten any shady spot.

Don’t ignore the shady spots; you just need to find the right plant. Some of these plants are loved by wildlife. Do your research, find the right plant for your specific needs.
Get ready to catch your breath! You are invited to join us for the Arizona Highlands Garden Conference ‘Growing in Thin Air.’ Since 2000, this annual conference has provided gardeners an opportunity to learn, meet, mingle and share ideas about gardening in northern Arizona’s 3,000 to 7,000 foot elevations. This year the conference will be held in Flagstaff at the du Bois Conference Center on the Northern Arizona University campus on Saturday October 6.

This year’s conference features two excellent keynote presenters. The morning speaker is David Salman, owner of Santa Fe Greenhouses and High Country Gardens, giving a talk titled ‘Planting to Attract Bees for Improved Pollination.’ Mr. Salman is an expert in a wide range of horticultural endeavors including greenhouse production, perennial propagation, commercial tree farming as well as how to attract pollinators.

In the afternoon, Charlie Nardozzi will present ‘Edible Landscaping.’ Mr. Nardozzi is a nationally recognized garden writer, speaker and radio and television personality. He currently writes the Edible Landscaping e-newsletter for the National Gardening Association and has authored “Vegetable Gardening for Dummies” and “Northeast Fruit and Vegetable Gardening.” You can learn more from his website: charlienardozzi.com/.

Many other well-known speakers will also make presentations during three break-out sessions. This includes conference favorites Kim Howell-Costion on ‘Lasagna Gardening,’ Joe Costion on rainwater harvesting and your vegetable garden, Phyllis Hogan from Winter Sun presenting a talk on medicinal plants, University of Arizona Entomologist Carl Olson on ‘Know Your Friends: Insects of the Home & Garden,’ and Frank Branham, chef and owner of The Cottage Place, on ‘Cooking from your Garden.’ We have several outside activities planned including a pruning demonstration by Yavapai County’s own Jeff Schalau and a tour of the SSLUG (Students for Sustainable and Urban Gardening) Garden on the NAU campus.

We also offer pre-conference garden tour on Friday, October 5. The tour costs $25, begins at 9:15 am, ends at 3:00 pm, and includes a gourmet lunch provided by Local Alternatives Catering. Tour sites will include a small farm that uses permaculture design principles, a water-wise garden that features native and drought-adapted plants, a lush garden of drought-adapted perennials watered by ‘Big Bertha’, a rain water harvesting system and the garden of the author of “Farm Your Front Yard.”

The cost of the conference is $75 per person if you register by September 14th. A light breakfast, lunch and afternoon refreshments are included with registration.

Rooms are available at the nearby La Quinta Inn & Suites, Flagstaff for a special conference rate of $125.10 plus tax. You must call La Quinta directly at (928)556-8666. Use the conference code #1320 and make your reservation before September 15.

Pre-registration is required for both the conference and garden tours as seating is limited. The conference agenda, tour information, and registration materials are available on our website (extension.arizona.edu/events/ahgc-2012) or by calling (928)774-1868 ext. 190. Please join us; we’re only at 6,910 feet.
This year we got the Monsoon rain without the madness. Like clockwork the rains came at the very opening of this year’s plant sale. It kept the number of customers down (from 704 last year to 504 this year), but surprisingly didn’t hurt our bottom line. The customers came steadily through the day so we missed the usual madness. The half price part of the sale didn’t happen until almost closing. Well at least we didn’t have to water the plants or hydrate our volunteers and customers.

The Master Gardener Association really came through with over 1200 plants this year. And they were beautiful with a great variety. Herbs were especially plentiful. Thanks to all the plant makers! We supplemented this with 180 plants from Mountain States and most of them sold as well.

There were some great garden accessories too. An electric lawn mower, numerous tools and wheel barrows sold well. The rain didn’t stop the tool sharpening operation. They again did a whopping $366 worth of it.

Thanks to John Mazella and Jeff Schalau and his jazz band for the entertainment. Luckily they managed to keep dry while playing great music.

This year the committee purchased some tables since we would not be able to access the tables provided by the county. Another step towards self sufficiency for the plant sale. Expenses totaled $1623 and gross sales exceeded last year by $200. This gave us net profits this year of $4717. Only $100 less than last year. We are amazed.

Thanks to all the volunteers who made the day possible. I would like to name all 82 of you but have run out of space. It looked like they were all having a good time despite the rain.

My impression from speaking to the public is that the Master Gardener Association annual Monsoon Madness plant sale has made it to the must do events in Prescott. Our reputation is so good that everyone asks us when the next sale is.
All of us at some point have probably used pesticides and fertilizers and over-watered. We don’t think too much about any one of these activities but what you don’t know could be affecting your life and others.

Studies have shown that home gardeners use more pesticides than farmers. One study showed that 27% of pesticides in the environment come from urban gardeners. A pretty horrifying thought as far as I am concerned. Although I couldn’t find any studies, it wouldn’t surprise me if gardeners were a bit heavy-handed with the fertilizer, too.

So what happens to all the stuff we put on our landscapes and gardens. Some of it ends up in our water. As rain or irrigation water percolates through the soil it picks up and carries those pesticides and fertilizers into the water table, into streams and rivers and into lakes and the ocean. Depending on where it goes, it might end up back in your drinking water.

Things you should do:
Always read the label of the product you are planning on using. Apply according to the label instructions!
Water only as needed.

Disposing of pesticides and fertilizers:
Fertilizers: When it comes to fertilizers the best thing to do is apply to your landscape per the directions and don’t over water. If you don’t want to use the fertilizer any longer, find a gardener who will. Do not pour down any drains or just dump on the ground.

Pesticides: Pesticides are a lot more difficult; there are more “don’t dos” than anything. READ THE LABEL; aside from the directions it may have information on how to dispose of it.

Do not pour insecticides or pesticides into a drain that runs into a sewage system.
FROM THE EDITOR: Please send or email articles and announcements to the address below. All articles must be in my hands by the 10th of the month. Short announcements (no more than 2 or 3 lines) will be accepted until the 25th.
Nora Graf
PO Box 3652
Camp Verde, AZ  86322
mesquite2@hotmail.com
(928) 567-6703

Prescott  
840 Rodeo Dr. 
Building C  
Prescott, AZ  86305 
(928) 445-6590  
FAX:  (928) 445-6593

Camp Verde  
2830 N. Commonwealth Dr 
Camp Verde, AZ  86322 
(928) 554-8999  
MG Desk (928) 554-8992

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jeffrey C. Silvertooth, Associate Dean & Director, Economic Development & Extension, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, The University of Arizona. The University of Arizona is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation in its programs and activities.
Next Meeting

August 15, 6:30pm, Cottonwood
Our speaker will be Edessa Carr.
Edessa has a Bachelor of Science degree in Anthropology from the University of Florida and received a Master’s Degree in Earth Science from Northern Arizona University. She currently works as the Water Resource Education Program Coordinator for the University of Arizona’s Yavapai Cooperative Extension Office. She works collaboratively with many organizations that are focused on watershed health, she delivers educational programs for adults, and she coordinates Arizona Project WET outreach programs for local youth. She also loves growing a food garden!

The spectacular rocks exposed in the Verde Valley give us a clue as to where water might be found underground. Join us to hear Edessa as she takes us on a tour of changes that have occurred in the Verde Valley over geologic time. She will be discussing a number of rock formations and how they relate to the availability of water locally.