



‘TOP’ SHRUBS AND VINES FOR LIGHT SHADE
By Pat Curran

Usually long-lived, disease/pest resistant, generally winter-hardy, won’t spread too much

Shrubs (Shade Tolerance or Preference Varies)

Chionanthus virginicus, fringetree	beautiful specimen; dioecious#
Daphne mezereum, February daphne	early bloomer; poisonous fruits
Daphne ‘Carol Mackie’	variegated leaves; fragrant flowers
Fothergilla major ‘Mt. Airy’	fragrant early flowers; good fall color;
Hamamelis vernalis ‘Sandra’, vernal witchhazel	spring bloomer; fall foliage color
Hamamelis virginiana & ‘Mohonk Red’, witchhazel	native locally, fall bloomer, fall foliage color
Hamamelis x hybrida ‘Arnold Promise,’ ‘Jelena’, hybrid witchhazel;	late winter bloomers; fall foliage interest
Hydrangea quercifolia, oakleaf hydrangea	flower buds damaged below -10 F; fall color
Ilex glabra, inkberry	dioecious# native evergreen holly
Ilex verticillata ‘Winter Gold’, winterberry	dioecious# native deciduous holly
Kerria japonica, Japanese kerria	green stems in winter; medium shade OK
Lindera benzoin, spicebush	dioecious# native; spring bloom
Mahonia aquifolium, Oregon grapeholly	flowers & fruit, but winter leaf scorch
Myrica pensylvanica, bayberry	dioecious# native; salt-tolerant
Rhododendron, Finnish hybrid rhododendrons ‘Pohjola’s Daughter,’ ‘Haaga’	extra-hardy evergreens for acid soil
Rhododendron, Northern Lights series azaleas ‘Spicy Lights,’ ‘Rosy Lights’	extra-hardy deciduous for acid soil
Rubus odoratus, flowering raspberry	native with large magenta flowers
Stephanandra incisa, cutleaf stephanandra	suckers and self-layers; dwarf cultivar available
Symphoricarpos albus, snowberry	white fruit

Vines for Light Shade

Aristolochia macrophylla, Dutchman’s pipe	twining vine grown for foliage
Hydrangea anomala petiolaris, climbing hydrangea	rootlike holdfasts cling to masonry or wood;

dioecious: separate male and female plants; both are needed for female plant to produce fruit

Reference:

Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation and Uses, Sixth Edition, Michael Dirr (invaluable and comprehensive, but no color pictures)

Dirr’s Encyclopedia of Trees & Shrubs, Michael Dirr (great color pictures, but not as comprehensive)

Shrubs & Vines for American Gardens, Trees for American Gardens, 2 books by Donald Wyman (older references with great plant lists, but do not use USDA hardiness zones)

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