



‘Top’ Shade Perennial Flowering Plants

From Pat Curran
CCE Tompkins County

Relatively long-lived and drought-resistant, don’t need frequent division, disease/pest resistant, staking not essential, winter-hardy, not fussy about soil if well-drained, don’t spread too much, preferably bloom for several weeks, good foliage quality.

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| • Alchemilla mollis, lady’s mantle | deer-resistant; foliage and flowers |
| • Anemone ‘Honorine Jobert’, ‘September Charm’ | not invasive like some varieties |
| • Astilbe species and varieties, ‘Fanal’ | deer-resistant but drought-sensitive |
| • Brunnera macrophylla ‘Jack Frost,’ ‘Looking Glass’ | deer-resistant hosta substitute |
| • Cimicifuga (now Actaea) racemosa, black snakeroot | native; vertical accent |
| • Corydalis lutea, ochroleuca | leave seedlings in place |
| • Dicentra eximia, fringed bleeding heart | long-blooming; may spread |
| • Dicentra spectabilis, old-fashioned bleeding heart | showy; goes dormant in August |
| • Epimedium species, barrenwort | small scale groundcover; dry shade OK |
| • Geranium macrorrhizum, bigroot geranium | excellent for dry shade |
| • Helleborus x hybridus, Lenten rose | deer-resistant early bloomer |
| • Heuchera ‘Green Spice’, ‘Amethyst Mist’ | watch out for frost-heaving |
| • Hosta ‘Krossa Regal’ | arching habit; slug-resistant variety |
| • Polygonatum commutatum, great Solomon’s seal | deer problem, native |
| • Pulmonaria ‘Trevi Fountain’, lungwort | showy early bloomer; mildew-resistant |

Reference:

Herbaceous Perennial Plants, Third Edition, by Allan M. Armitage
Perennials for American Gardens by Ruth Rogers Clausen and Nicolas H. Ekstrom
The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting & Pruning Techniques, by Tracy DiSabato-Aust

Learn more:

Cornell Bluegrass Lane perennial research:
http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/cornell_herbaceous/
Missouri Botanic Garden Plant Finder (over 6800 plants):
<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx>
Garden Guidance
www.gardening.cornell.edu

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