



Landscaping & Gardening in the **SHADE**

by John Mason & Staff of ACS Distance Education

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CHAPTER 1 UNDERSTANDING SHADY GARDENS

Shade should never be seen as a problem, in fact, it should be treated as a potentially beautiful garden feature.



Light shade creates a dappled affect of light such as this, often seen under a canopy of overhanging or adjacent trees where the tree foliage is not too dense.

SHADE CAN BE AN ASSET IN THE GARDEN

Shade is a valuable commodity in most gardens. When it's hot, shade makes us feel cooler and indeed temperatures really are lower in shaded areas. In addition, shade provides a wonderful sense of relaxation.

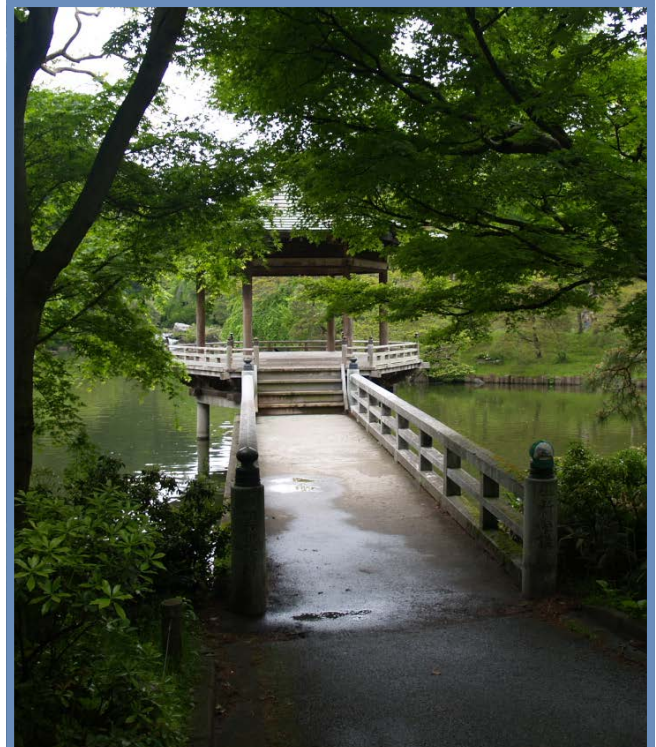
Everyone can benefit from a garden with some shady spots. Children will be able to play outside longer without getting sunburnt. Glare is reduced, and for many that means fewer headaches or eye strain, and the chance of skin cancers is also lessened. Even family pets benefit if they can find a shady spot to keep them cool on a hot day. In warmer climates the summer sun can be hot and relentless - shade then becomes

a particularly desirable garden asset. Even in milder climates though, shaded areas makes outdoor living far more comfortable in the height of summer.

Shaded areas are usually wetter because of reduced evaporation rates, cooler, greener and more protected from wind, frost and rain than open areas. Sometimes however, areas under large trees can in fact be drier if the foliage is dense and catches rain water before it reaches the ground. Although shaded garden are often less colourful, as the sun filters through tree tops and leaves, it also creates interesting and stunning light patterns in the garden.



Part shade is often seen alongside walls or hedges where the sun creates shade over an area for part of the day; but at a different time of day, the same area can be in full sun.



Heavier shading occurs when the tree foliage is dense enough to totally block the sun, rather than just creating dappled light on the ground

Shade occurs in gardens for many different reasons. Sometimes it is created deliberately, other times it happens unintentionally. When developing or redeveloping any garden, it is important to understand what causes shade and to consider whether shade is wanted. Sometimes we start out with shade, such as when large trees are left on the property by a developer, or tall buildings cast shadows over parts of the property. Other times we need to create shade by planting trees or building pergolas, fences or shade-houses. Before you build anything on your property, whether a house, shed, garage, or even a garden wall, consider the shade it will create. Whenever you plant a tree you should always think about the shade it will eventually cast (when it is mature) and how that will affect the garden around it.



When the shade is heavy and the tree roots are vigorous, it can become difficult for anything to grow well under the canopy; sometimes even weeds have trouble growing.

SHADE CAN ALSO BECOME A PROBLEM

Shade might not be a problem when you start making a garden, but as time goes on a garden which started out as lightly shaded can become very heavily shaded. As trees and shrubs grow, the amount of shade they create increases. Whenever a new pergola, fence or shed is built, more shade is created. As a garden becomes increasingly shaded, plants which were originally growing well in full sun or light shade, may find themselves struggling in much darker conditions. A garden seat which was originally in a warm part of the garden may end up in a spot which is often too cold to sit in. A window which caught

the winter sun and warmed the house may become covered by a mature tree, turning what was a pleasant sitting room, into the coldest room in the house.

The biggest mistake made by amateur gardeners is overplanting – with little consideration given to how large the trees that are planted will eventually grow. When you plant trees in any garden you should aim to create areas of shade and areas that are not shaded. This can be achieved by spacing trees according to their eventual height and spread and by choosing species that are suited to the size of the plot. There is no point in planting an oak tree in a small garden, even if it is small when you buy it, eventually it may spread enough to take over the entire garden!