

Plants for Dry Places

Sun and Shade

If your yard happens to include areas that are especially dry, you may think your choices for what to plant are limited. Actually, even though there are hardly any plants that require dry soil, there are many plants that will adapt to those conditions and perform very well. Some plants have physical adaptations like fleshy leaves that help them thrive with less water. Other plants adapt from a young age by growing deeper roots.

Working with what you have is a viable option. There are plants suited to almost every situation. But often, we want to grow plants that are not ideal. If their needs are not too drastically different than what the growing conditions offer, you do have the option of making some changes. Dry soil can be amended by adding large amounts of peat moss, manure or compost. Amendments need to be mixed in with the existing soil, not just layered on top of it. Once the plants are installed, use organic mulch on the surface. Organic mulches such as wood bark reduce evaporation and runoff as well as cool the soil. It also helps to make sure the area is thoroughly soaked when it is watered. This will encourage deep rooting. Keep in mind that while you can take some steps that will allow you to grow more plants in a dry area, it is difficult to completely change an area.

Check through the following lists for plants that will do well in your specific situation. Be sure to take into consideration how much sun or shade the plants will receive.

Perennials for Sunny and Dry

- Yarrow *Achillea*
- Bugloss *Anchusa*
- Pussy Toes *Antennaria*
- Rock Cress *Arabis*
- Sea Thrift *Armeria*
- Wormwood *Artemisia*
- Butterfly Weed *Asclepias*
- Basket of Gold *Aurinia*
- Cupid's Dart *Catananche*
- Snow in the Summer *Cerastium*
- Feverfew *Chrysanthemum*
- Threadleaf Coreopsis *Coreopsis vert.*
- Carnation *Dianthus*
- Coneflower *Echinacea*
- Globe Thistle *Echinops*
- Daisy Fleabane *Erigeron*
- Meadowsweet *Filipendula*
- Blanket Flower *Gaillardia*
- Baby's Breath *Gypsophila*
- Daylily *Hemerocallis*
- Gayfeather *Liatris*
- Flax *Linum*
- Some Ornamental Grasses
- Catmint *Nepeta*
- Beardtongue *Penstemon*
(all but Husker Red)
- Russian Sage *Perovskia*
- Creeping Phlox *Phlox Subulata*
- Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia*
- Soapwort *Saponaria*
- Autumn Joy Sedum *Sedum*
- Goldenrod *Solidago*
- Tansy *Tanacetum*
- Spiderwort *Tradescantia*
- Verbena *Verbena*
- Adam's Needle *Yucca*

Annuals for Sunny and Dry

- Pot Marigold *Calendula*
- Bachelor's Button *Centaurea*
- Cosmos *Cosmos*
- Gazania *Gazania*
- Globe Amaranth *Gomphrena*
- Lantana *Lantana*
- Sweet Alyssum *Lobularia*
- Love-in-a-Mist *Nigella*
- Geraniums *Pelargonium*
- Moss Rose *Portulaca*
- Mexican Sunflower *Tithonia*
- Vinca *Vinca*
- Threadleaf Zinnia *Zinnia angustifolia*

Perennials for Shady and Dry

- Pearly Everlasting *Anaphalis*
- Bearberry *Arctostaphylos*
- Lady's Mantle *Alchemilla mollis*
- Lily of the Valley *Convallaria*
- Barrenwort *Epimedium*
- Cranesbill (some) *Geranium*
- Hosta *Hosta*
- Grape Hyacinths *Muscari*
- Japanese Spurge *Pachysandra*
- Lungwort *Pulmonaria*
- Lamb's Ears *Stachys*
- Periwinkle *Vinca*

Trees and Shrubs for Shady and Dry

- Amur Maple *Acer ginnala*
- Bush Honeysuckle *Lonicera*
- Buckthorn *Rhamnus*
- Alpine Current *Ribes*
- Yews *Taxus*

Trees and Shrubs for Sunny and Dry

- Amur Maple *Acer ginnala*
- Norway Maple *Acer platanoides*
- Barberry *Berberis*
- Hackberry *Celtis*
- Smokebush *Cotinus*
- Russian Olive *Eleagnus*
- Ash *Fraxus*
- Ginkgo *Ginkgo*
- Honeylocust *Gledista*
- Coffeetree *Gymnocladus*
- Juniper *Juniperus*
- Ironwood *Ostrya*
- Potentilla *Potentilla*
- Buckthorn *Rhamnus*
- Alpine Currant *Ribes*
- Sumac *Rhus*
- Black Locust *Robinia*
- Tamarisk *Tamarisk*
- Yews *Taxus*
- Elms *Elmus*