



# Sage Advice from the Roundhouse....

## Native Plants for Dry Shade

When landscaping unirrigated shady areas, such as under oak trees, you will enjoy a much greater level of success by choosing the appropriate plant material. Here is a list of various drought tolerant plants to select from to add just the right touch to that dark spot. Remember, when planting under and around mature oaks, it is best to leave the area inside the dripline (under the canopy) free of vegetation and covered with the natural leaf mulch.

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### **Annuals**

*Clarkia* (Farewell-to-Spring)  
*Collinsia heterophylla* (Chinese Houses)  
*Eschscholzia californica* (California Poppy)  
*Nemophila maculata* (Five-Spot)  
*Nemophila menziesii* (Baby Blue Eyes)  
Tree of Life Shade Mix (misc. species)

### **Perennials**

*Dudleya* species (Live-Forever)  
*Eriogonum* species (Buckwheat)  
*Mimulus* species (Monkeyflower)  
*Monardella villosa* (Coyote Mint)  
*Polystichum munitum* (Western Sword Fern)  
*Sisyrinchium bellum* (Blue-Eyed Grass)  
*Solanum xantii* (Purple Nightshade)  
*Solidago californica* (California Goldenrod)  
*Zauschneria* species (California Fuschia)

### **Grasses**

*Leymus glaucus* (Giant Wildrye)  
*Melica imperfecta* (Coastrange Melic)  
*Muhlenbergia rigens* (Deergrass)  
*Stipa* species (aka *Nasella*; Needlegrass)

### **Shrubs**

*Arctostaphylos* 'Point Reyes' (Manzanita)  
*Arctostaphylos* 'Howard McMinn'  
*Carpenteria californica* (Bush Anemone)  
*Ceanothus* 'Mount Vision' (Wild Lilac)  
*Ceanothus* 'Skylark'  
*Galvezia speciosa* (Bush Snapdragon)  
*Heteromeles arbutifolia* (Toyon)  
*Heuchera* species (Coral Bells)  
*Holodiscus discolor* (Ocean Spray)  
*Iris douglasiana* (Douglas Iris)  
*Mahonia* species (Oregon Grape)  
*Penstemon* species (Beardtongue)  
*Philadelphus lewisii* (Wild Mock Orange)  
*Physocarpus capitatus* (Ninebark)  
*Rhododendron occidentale* (Western Azalea)  
*Ribes* species (Currant, Gooseberry)  
*Rhamnus* 'Eve Case' (Calif. Coffeeberry)  
*Rhus integrifolia* (Lemonade Berry)  
*Rosa californica* (California Wild Rose)  
*Salvia* species (Sage)  
*Trichostema lanatum* (Woolly Blue Curls)

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In most cases, it is more practical to use mixed accent plantings in understories, rather than a single groundcover. Shade gardening lends itself well to different aesthetic situations. Use the light and shadows to create different effects (such as placing a deciduous shrub where the rays come through the canopy to dramatize the dormant state). Also consider using variegated (drought tolerant) varieties or plants with grey-green foliage to 'light up' a dark area and add depth. A shady spot is also an excellent opportunity to add a bench, statue, bird feeder or other garden art to your landscape.

Recommended Reading : Compatible Plants Under and Around Oaks, Hagen, Coate and Oldham, 1991.

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