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Shade Gardening

While shade in the garden can appear frustrating, a good approach when dealing with this facet of gardening is to consider the lack of direct light an asset. It is cooling and inviting and provides a useful retreat during the warmest times of the year.

Planning and Planting in the Shade

Hostas prefer moist soil and indirect, dappled sun or shade. In Colorado, it is best to keep them out of the direct sun. Shaded areas are best, however Hostas will also grow well in areas with filtered light or in areas with morning/late afternoon sun.

Type 1: Dappled and Light Shade

Check the label of the plant to determine the height and spacing so that the plants can be placed appropriately. Hostas perform best in deeply dug soil (14"-18") that is amended with peat moss and compost. After planting, side dress the plants with mulch in order to keep the soil evenly moist.

Type 2: Open to Medium Shade

Clumps may be divided in the spring, however, they have no need for regular division. Clumps may remain in place for many years, growing larger and more impressive each year. Initial planning and spacing will provide Hostas the space to grow big and beautiful.

Type 3: Dense Shade

The quality of the light found in these areas is dense and dark. It is often in areas underneath large trees, tall walls, and fences. There is often tree roots just beneath the soil, this leads to an issue in which most of the available nutrients are absorbed by the roots of the tree. Consider the use of the area- if it is rarely viewed or irrigated, mulch might be considered.

Solutions:

Select plants that prefer full shade such as Bergenia or Bugleweed