

Sunny



Acidic Soils



Shady

Drier



Wetter

Phormium

Callistemon

Dryopteris
Fern

Blenchum
Fern

Ophiopogon

Pinus

Holly

Sarcococca

Ceanothus

Begonia

Ligustrum
(privet)

Fatsia

Viburnum
Bodnantense

Erica

Heather

Fothergilla

Azalea

Rhododendron

Skimmia

Conifers

Thuja

Choisya

Magnolia

Hydrangea

Rhododendron

Skimmia

Pieris

Cornus

Lupins

Primula

Camellia

Acers

Ferns

Berberis

Clematis

Trillium

rule of thumb
Our

guide to the types of plants you want & those you don't!

Having the right plant in the right place makes for both a better garden and one that is more likely to look after itself; which should mean there is less unwanted garden maintenance for you to do.

Sunny & dry

Acidic soils tend to be less fertile than alkaline or neutral soils and are in general free draining. The plants that will grow well in sunny sites need to be tough and drought resistant, so your choice of sun loving plants that suit acidic soil is fairly limited.

Many of these plants will tend to flower earlier in the year, when the soil is still damp from the winter and spring rains, so to extend the flowering season of your border you can use pots to pop into the borders, or you need to consider adding lime and other nutrients to the soil. Then you can grow a wider range of plants.

PLANTS THAT WILL GROW:

Erica, Leptospermum, Callistemon, Calluna, Erica, Tamarix, Hibiscus, Cytisus and Berberis

Partial shade

A little shades can increase the range of plants that will grow well in acidic soils. Many acidic type soils occur in woodlands, so there are plenty of prettier plants you can use.

TRY TO AVOID:

Obviously plants that grow well over chalk are not particularly likely to grow well in acidic soils, for example Alpines Mediterranean plants & quite a lot of Bedding plants

YOU CAN USE:

All those listed for sunny sites, but also, Spruce, Lupins, Primulas, Camellias, Rhododendrons (generally speaking the smaller leaved Rhodos are more sun tolerant) Skimmias and Hydrangeas.

Shadier but damp

Many acidic soils arise in woodlands, so these are perfect conditions for growing a wide range of shade tolerant plants. You can indulge your passion for Azaleas and Rhododendrons - although these finish flowering in spring, you can elongate the season of interest by adding Pieris for it's colourful foliage and Acers for the Autumn leaf colour.

YOU CAN USE:

Primula, Rhododendrons, Camellias, Begonias, Erythroniums, Pleiones and many types of Ferns.

Shaded and dry

You are limited by tough growing conditions here, most Rhododendrons although they will grow in shade need a moisture retentive soil to thrive, so if you are prepared to water, then you can grow all the plants that will thrive there.

There are some Ferns; Blenchum ferns, that will grow here as will Pachysandra, most other plants will need your help to establish themselves.

In these conditions it is probably best to 'buck nature' and build raised beds or use containers to fill the area with plants that will thrive in deep dry shade - plants like Ligustrum, Aucuba, Hydrangea Macrophylla, Dryopteris Ferns, Hellebores, Brunnera, Ivy, Vinca and Lily of the Valley.