

Sunny

Sandy Soils

Yucca

Phlomis

Tamarix

Cotinus

Lonicera

Fuschia
(hardy)

Perovskia

Cytisus

Coggyria

Rosemary

Choisya

Lavender

Calluna

Annuals

Eleagnus

Acers

Salvia

Hibiscus

Euonymous

Lavatera

Grasses

Holly

Helianthemum

Philadelphus

Griselinia

Herbs

Rosa

Ribes

Viburnum

Photinia

Rugosa

Escallonia

Skimmia

Sarcococca

Spirea

Hypericum

Pittosporum

Vinca

Shady

nb: sandy soils don't retain moisture, so it's dry sun or it's dry shade.

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.

Really sunny

Your biggest problems are that; when it rains, the water drains away before the plants can suck any up and, sandy soils tend to lack nutrients. So your plants will have to be able to thrive in 'desert like' conditions.

TRY TO AVOID:

Plants with big showy flowers or large leaves; Bedding plants; 'food hungry' plants like fruits; vegetables; Dahlias, Roses and Lilies.

YOU CAN USE:

Plants that have silvery leaves; plants with furry leaves, thin stemmed or wiry stems. Plants with big fleshy roots (that retain water), plants that have tap roots and plants with thick succulent leaves that retain any available moisture are all good choices. Most grasses, annuals and plants with small papery delicate flowers will also generally grow well.

Some shade

As per for sunny sites, the flowering intensity of the plants you use may be reduced as there is more shade.

TRY TO AVOID:

Plants that require a nutrient rich soil to perform, they will grow in sandy soils, but you will need to regularly add mulches and manure to the soil to keep them looking their best. Which is a lot of work, so try planting these in their place...

YOU CAN USE:

As per the sunny sites, but look also for plants with tough looking leaves or shiny leaves or really tiny leaves - these prevent moisture being lost so quickly. Tough drought tolerant shrubs, like Lilac, Philadelphus, Euonymus, Hebes, Salvias, Phormiums, Miscanthus, Euphorbias and Spirea.

Mostly shaded

As the light levels fall, you need to use really tough shrubs and plants that can cope with the dual conditions of dry soil and a soil that doesn't have much food in it. If you impose your planting scheme rather than work with the conditions, you will either have poor insipid looking plants or you will need to add lots and lots of manure and mulch to the soil frequently.

TRY TO AVOID:

Lush green foliage type plants, plants with big green leaves or soft delicate looking foliage that will quickly wilt.

YOU CAN USE:

Winter, spring and autumn flowering bulbs. Tougher plants that thrive in dry shade like Box, Ivy, Aucuba, Sarcococca, Vinca, Epimedium and Hypericums. Bear in mind though you will probably need to give these plants a bit of TLC until they have established themselves.

All shade & no sun

This is probably one of the most difficult areas to try to grow anything in, no sun, no moisture and not much in the way of soil nutrients. So the reality is you probably need to rethink planting anything here. Maybe this is the spot for the shed or the bins for example. If you do want to grow plants here, then it would be advisable to use pots or a raised bed - that way you only have to contend with drier shade. There are loads of wonderful plants that will thrive in those conditions. If you do decide to plug away and plant, then you will need to add mulch and manure to the soil before you plant - and lots of it!

YOU CAN USE:

You want the toughest plants and shrubs, their fast growth will be held in check by the tough conditions, so; They need to be shade tolerant but fast growing, good for naturalising, good for ground cover, speed spreaders and even triffids are generally OK. As are plants with tough leathery foliage.