

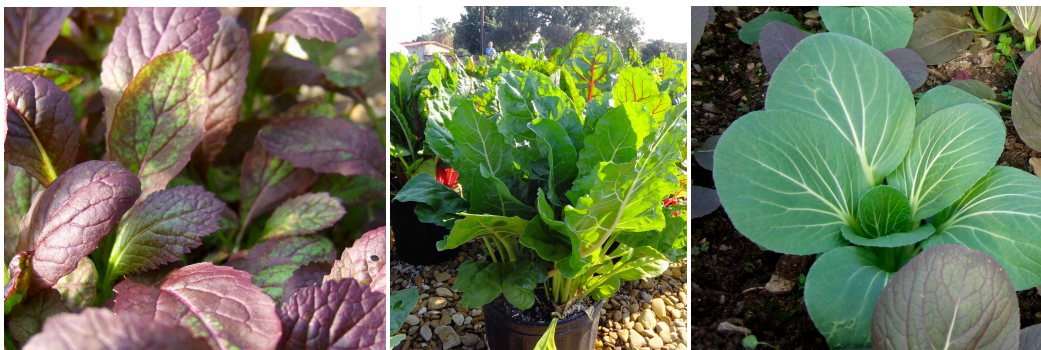


## Growing Vegetables and Flowers in the Shade

There are degrees of shade, which range from 100% shade in an alley between two buildings, to dappled shade under a tree, or shade in the morning (before noon), or afternoon (after 2 p.m.). Your particular scenario will be a factor in what you can grow successfully. In general, partial shade for growing purpose is generally considered to mean less than 5-6 hours of full sun.

Some plants are more tolerant of shady conditions than others. Here are a few edible and ornamental plants to try if your garden is sun-challenged, and some tips on how to get the most out of the little sun you have.

### Greens, Herbs, and Roots



Greens such as **Arugula**, **Spinach**, **Mustard**, and **Lettuce**, as well as **Chard** and **Bok Choy**, can tolerate some shade. If you are having difficulty finding a place with 5-6 hours of sun, make a sun map. Photograph the garden at various times of day in spring, and again in summer to determine which areas get maximum sunlight.



**Kale**, some herbs including **Parsley**, **Cilantro**, **Chervil**, **Basil**, and **Dill**, and root vegetables including **Carrots**, **Beets**, **Radishes**, and **Turnips** are more tolerant of shade than fruit-bearing vegetables like tomatoes and peppers. Experiment to see what works best in your circumstances.

#### Tips for growing vegetables in part shade

- Reflective surfaces, including white walls and reflective mulches, can direct light to your plants.
- Raised beds are particularly important if you are growing vegetables under the dappled shade of trees, as tree roots will rob moisture from your plants.
- Containers can be a shade gardener's best friend. Use lightweight pots that can be easily moved as seasonal changes affect light.

## Wildflowers

Observe nature. The wildflowers growing and blooming at the edges of woods will also add color to your part-shade garden. Here are five that you can easily grow from seed.



**Phlox**, **Virginia Bluebells**, wild **Geranium**, **Columbine**, and native **Penstemon** varieties are all native perennial flowers that tend to self sow in their natural habitats. If the species you are growing is native to a cold winter climate, the seeds will have to be cold-treated—chilled for about a month—before they germinate. You can do this by placing a few seeds on a moist paper towel, securing them in a plastic bag, and refrigerating them. Wildflower seeds may take 2 weeks or more to germinate, so be patient. Another option is to plant the seeds outdoors in fall, in pots or directly in the soil.

## Annual Flowers

Annual flowers generally require a good amount of sun, being tropical in origin. However, there are a few that are tolerant of partial shade.



**Forget-me-nots** (*Myosotis*), **Johnny Jump Ups** (*Viola*), **Sweet Alyssum** (*Lobularia*), **Salvias** of many kinds, and **Nicotiana** (particularly woodland tobacco, *Nicotiana sylvestris*, and *Nicotiana alata*) tolerate some degrees of shade. You can start annual flowers indoors 4-6 weeks before you plan to transplant them into the garden. Many flowers, including balsam impatiens, sweet alyssum, hummingbird salvia (*Salvia coccinea*), and nicotiana, can be sown directly in the garden. Prepare the seedbed well by working in a 2-inch layer of compost and keep the soil consistently moist until the seeds germinate.

**Coleus** can be a shade garden star, not because of its flowers, but because its attractive foliage remains colorful all season. Start seeds 8-12 weeks before the planting time in your region.

### Tip for a Colorful Shade Garden

Grow lush containers of annual flowers in your sunniest spots. Place them artfully in your shade garden when you want the garden to look its best.