Shade gardening is one of the more challenging situations for the home gardener. What causes the shade is the first thing to notice — this often dictates the density of the light. Trees allow a fair amount of light to filter through (depending on the type of tree of course), houses allow less, and overhanging porches on the north sides of buildings are the darkest.

When choosing shade plants it is important to consider form, foliage, and texture. Many of the plants that like shade don’t have showy flowers but make up for it with unusual structure or foliage color. A variegated leaf can catch the eye as quickly as a blossom. And the contrast of different shades of green, a mixture of spiky leaves, and soft ferns can be quite soothing.

**Perennials**
- Aquilegia formosa (Columbine)
- Boykinia (Brook Foam)
- Disporum (Fairy Bells)
- Epipactus gigantea (Stream Orchid)
- Erigeron glaucus (Seaside Daisy)
- Erythronium (Fawn Lily)
- Heuchera (Alumroot)
- Iris PCH (Pacific Coast Hybrids)
- Lilium pardalinum (Tiger Lily)
- Lilium parvum (Alpine Lily)
- Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal Flower)
- Penstemon heterophyllus
- Potentilla gracilis (Cinquefoil)
- Salvia mellifera (Black Sage)
- Sisyrinchium bellum (Blue eyed Grass)
- Sisyrinchium californicum (Yellow eyed Grass)
- Thalictrum occidentale (Meadow Rue)
- Tolmiea menziesii (Piggy-Back Plant)

**Grasses**
- Calamagrostis nutkaensis
- Carex tumulicola (Berkeley Sedge)
- Festuca californica (California Fescue)
- Festuca rubra (Red Fescue)
- Hierochloe (Vanilla Grass)
- Juncus effusus (Soft Rush)
- Juncus patens
- Melica torreyana
- Scirpus californica (Tule Grass)

**Ferns**
- Polypodium californicum
- Polystichum munitum (Sword Fern)
- Woodwardia (Giant Chain Fern)

**Vines**
- Calystegia (Morning Glory)
- Lonicera hispidula (Honeysuckle)
- Vitis californica (California Grape)

**Groundcovers**
- Anemopsis (Yerba Mansa)
- Asarum (Wild Ginger)
- Fragaria californica (Woodland Strawberry)
- Gaultheria shallon (Salal)
- Oxyalis oregana (Redwood Sorrel)
- Salvia mellifera (Black Sage)
- Sedum spathulifolium

**Trees and Shrubs**
- Acer macrophyllum (Big Leaf Maple)
- Arctostaphylos (Manzanita)
- Calycanthus (Spice Bush)
- Cornus (Red Twig Dogwood)
- Frangula californica (Coffeeberry)
- Garrya elliptica (Silk-tassel)
- Lyonothamnus (Fernleaf Catalina Ironwood)
- Mahonia (Oregon Grape)
- Philadelphus lewisii (Mock Orange)
- Physocarpus capitatus (Nine Bark)
- Pinus contorta (Shore Pine)
- Ribes sanguineum (Pink Flowering Currant)
- Rosa californica
- Rosa gymnocarpa
- Rosa woodsii
- Rubus parviflorus (Thimbleberry)
- Sambucus racemosa (Red Elderberry)
- Sequoia (Coastal Redwood)
- Vaccinium ovatum (Huckleberry)

[* denotes tolerant of heavy shade]