

Shrubs for Shady Spots



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Shady locations don't have to be dull or empty. There are a number of shrubs that will grow well in shady areas and provide color or greenery. Below is a list of some of the shrubs for shady spots in Oklahoma landscapes.

Small-leaved Boxwood (*Buxus microphylla*) Hardiness zone 6-9; evergreen; shade to full sun; 3-5 feet tall and slightly smaller width; pyramidal shape; small tear-drop shaped leaf, medium to dark green year round; slower growing; good for shearing into a small hedge.

Hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) Hardiness zone 6-9; deciduous; shade to morning sun; 6 feet tall and 8 feet wide; broad, round shrub; large ovate leaf, medium green; large blue flowers in high pH soil and pink in low pH soil; moderate grower; amend soil with organic matter before planting; cultivar 'Glowing Embers' 3 feet tall, 'Pia' 1-2 feet tall.

Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) First Oklahoma Proven shrub selection; hardiness zone 5-9; deciduous; partial shade to full sun; 6-10 feet tall and 8-12 feet wide; broad, round shrub; large ovate leaf, medium green in summer, turning burgundy in the fall; large spikes of white flowers; fast grower; cultivar 'Pee Wee' only 4 feet tall.

Burford Holly (*Ilex conata* 'Burfordii') Hardiness zone 7-9; evergreen; deep shade to full sun; 10-12 feet tall and wide; rounded shrub; 2 inch long, cupped leaf with a single spine, dark green year round; red berries in winter; moderate rate of growth; dense growth habit; easily sheared to variable forms; dwarf cultivar reaching 6 feet tall.

Foster Holly (*Ilex x attenuate*) Hardiness zone 6-9; evergreen; shade to full sun; 20-25 feet tall and width 1/2 the height; conical shape; narrow slightly toothed leaf, glossy dark green year round; red winter berries; fast growing.

Nellie R. Stevens Holly (*Ilex x 'Nellie R. Stevens'*) Hardiness zone 6-9; evergreen; shade to full sun; 10-20 feet tall and width 2/3 the height; pyramidal shape; traditional holly leaf, dark green year round; red berries in winter; moderate rate of growth; dense growth habit.

Henry's Garnet Sweetspire (*Itea virginica* 'Henry's Garnet') Hardiness zone 5-9; deciduous; shade to morning sun; 3-4 feet tall and 4-6 feet wide; erect with multiple stems; medium-sized, tapered leaf, medium to dark green turning a brilliant red in the fall; white, waxy flowers occur on the terminal ends like numerous, small bottle brushes; moderate rate of growth; amend soil with organic matter before planting.

Oregon Grape Holly (*Mahonia aquifolium*) Hardiness zone 4-8; evergreen; shade to early morning sun; avoid hot, windy areas; 3-8 feet tall with 3-5 foot spread; upright growth habit; ovate, dark green glossy leaves in the summer, red-purple in the winter; yellow spring flowers; blue-purple fall and winter berries; slow to moderate rate of growth.

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Leatherleaf Mahonia (Mahonia bealei) Hardiness zone 6-9; evergreen; shade to early morning sun; 6-10 feet tall and width 3/4 the height; upright growth habit; broad, spiny, gray-green leaves in the summer, color lightens in the winter; fragrant, lemon yellow early spring flowers; purple-blue fall berries; slow to moderate rate of growth.

Nandina (Nandina domestica) Hardiness zone 6-9; evergreen; shade to full sun; 3-6 feet tall and slightly smaller width; upright growth habit; compound leaf with narrow leaflets, light green leaves in the summer, turn bright red in the winter, red color is brighter with more sun exposure; bright red fruits in late summer and fall; excellent for locations with brief periods of full sun during mid-day; wide range of cultivars with different heights.

Pygmy or Dwarf Bamboo (Pleioblastus pygmaeus sun, Arundinaria pygmaea) Hardiness zone 7-11; evergreen; shade to full sun; 16-18 inches tall and 3 feet wide; compound leaf with narrow leaflets, light green year round; moderate growth rate, not invasive; does well in both wet and dry sights.

Azalea (Rhododendrun species) Hardiness zone 5-8, depending on cultivar; evergreen and deciduous; 2-12 feet tall and width about 1 1/2 the height; rounded shrub; dark green leaves; fabulous intensity and variety of flower color that covers the entire plant; moderate growth rate; will not tolerate dry, windy sites, needs good moisture, acid soil and good drainage; select plants carefully and spend extra time creating the right soil conditions; plant in a shady location.

Aglojap Yew (Taxus x media) Hardiness zone 4-7; evergreen; shade to early morning sun; 3-20 feet tall and similar width, based on cultivar; upright to rounded growth habit; narrow, dark green leaves year round; slow grower; all plant parts are toxic if eaten; Oklahoma hardy cultivars include 'Runyan, Thayerae and Hicksii'.

Burkwood Viburnum (Viburnum x burkwoodii) Hardiness zone 5-8; deciduous; shade to early morning sun; 8-10 feet tall and similar width; upright, rounded, open shrub; oblong, dark green leaves turn wine-red some falls; pink buds open to reveal white flowers in April; slow-moderate growth rate; amend soil with organic matter before planting; 'Mohawk' highly rated cultivar.

Koreanspice Viburnum (Viburnum carlesii) Hardiness zone 5-8; deciduous; shade to early morning sun; 4-5 feet tall and 4-8 feet wide; rounded, dense shrub; medium-sized, rounded, dull, dark green leaves sporadically turn reddish in the fall; pink to red buds open to reveal white, very fragrant blossoms in April and May; slow growth rate; amend soil with organic matter before planting; 'Aurora, Carlotta and Cayuga' are newer superior cultivars.

Judd Viburnum (Viburnum x juddii) Hardiness zone 4-8; deciduous; shade to early morning sun; 6-8 feet tall and similar width; rounded, dense shrub; medium-sized, oval, dark green leaves sometimes turn red in the fall; pink to red buds open to reveal white, fragrant blossoms in April; slow growth rate; amend soil with organic matter before planting.

European Cranberry Viburnum (Viburnum opulus) Hardiness zone 3-8; deciduous; shade to part sun; 8-12 feet tall and 10-15 feet wide; upright, spreading, multi-stem habit; medium-sized, lobed dark green leaves sporadically turn yellow-red to reddish purple in the fall; reveal white, highly fragrant blossoms in May; fast grower, amend soil with organic matter before planting.

**For more information contact the Garfield County OSU Extension,
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