

CITY TOUGH PLANTS FOR THE DRY SHADE

Four Nurseries in the New York Area Show off Some Stock That Endures

Plants in cityscapes require street-smart adaptation and natural toughness. Located in the shadows of tall buildings, they get lots of shade and little exposure to the elements. As such, they are both shaded and dry – offering challenges to the urban landscape designer, contractor and installer, as well as professional park managers.

New York Department of Parks and Recreation prepared a special display, “City Tough Plants for the Dry Shade,” that featured plants donated by area nurserymen: Rosedale Nurseries Inc. and Green Valley Nursery Inc. of Hawthorne, N.Y., Shemin Nurseries Inc. of Greenwich, Conn., and Sunny Border Nurseries, Inc. of Kensington., Conn.

The show, a citywide effort by Parks & Recreation personnel, was exhibited in New York. Plants featured in the “City Tough Plants” exhibit then were planted out in the city’s park.

According to Parks & Rec., which maintains more than 26,200 acres of parklands, many city park plants are notable for their foliage and flowers and are suitable for other urban landscape projects.

City horticulturists said that landscaping with pocket plantings in the dense shade of urban trees such as the thickly rooted Norway Maples is a Herculean task. The chore is simplified by choosing the right plant for the locale, considering plant hardiness, soil type, acidity and drainage.

Three inches of humus or peat moss dug in at the time of planting helps the landscaper make a successful urban installation. Likewise, mulching with two-to-three inches of shredded leaves or bark to prevent suckering and protect against excessive evaporation. Water at installation and during dry weather.

Here is a list of the plants featured in the City Tough Plant exhibit, **with asterisks marking those plants especially suited for dry shade in the urban landscape**, according to Tom Ching, Horticulturist for the City of New York:

SHRUBS, VINES AND GROWDCOVERS:

- *Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*, 'Atropurpurea')
- *Variegated Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria* 'Variegatum')
- Aucuba (*Aucuba japonica*)
- *Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*)
- *English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- *Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*)
- *Leucothoe (*Leucothoe axillaris*)
- *Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)
- Oregon Grape (*Mahonia* spp.)
- Japanese Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*)
- *Japanese Andromeda (*Pieris japonica*)
- *Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*)
- Azaleas and Rhododendrons (*Rhododendron* spp.)
- *Yew (*Taxus* spp.)
- *Creeping Myrtle (*Vinca minor*)

PERENNIALS:

- *Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*)
- *Japanese Painted Fern (*Athyrium nipponicum* 'Pictum')
- *Bergenia (*Bergenia cordifolia*)
- *Siberian Bugloss (*Brunnera macrophylla*)
- *Leadwort (*Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*)
- *Lily-of-the-Valley (*Convallaria majalis*)
- Yellow Corydalis (*Corydalis lutea*)
- *Western Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra eximia*)
- *Barrenwort (*Epimedium* spp.)
- Coralbells (*Heuchera* spp.)
- *Hosta (*Hosta* spp.)
- Crested Iris (*Iris cristata*)
- *Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon* 'Variegatum')
- *Lilyturf (*Liriope* spp. And *Ophiopogon* spp.)
- *White Ribbon Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea* 'Picta')
- *Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)
- *Lungwort (*Pulmonaria saccharata*)
- *Refined Comfrey (*Trachystemon orientale*)

ANNUALS AND BIENNIALS:

- *Wax Begonia (*Begonia x semperflorens*)
- Coleus (*Coleus x hybridus*)
- Polka Dot Plant (*Hypoestes phyllostachya*)
- Impatiens
- Dwarf Edging Lobelia (*Lobelia erinus*)
- *Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*)
- *Honesty or Money Plant (*Lunnaria annua 'Alba'*)
- *Forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*)

BULBS AND TUBERS:

- *Hardy Cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium*)
- *Winter Aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*)
- *Spanish Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanicus*)
- *Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*)
- *Siberian Squill (*Scilla siberica*)

New York's Parks & Recreation Department oversees neighborhood playgrounds, beaches, formal gardens, recreation centers, marshes, street malls and wildflower meadows.

Its exhibit was part of the spring flower show sponsored by Horticultural Society of New York.