

“50 Greys of Shade” Colin Moat 9th February 2022

Colin runs **Pineview Plants**, a specialist nursery offering a wide selection of shade loving plants plus many other perennials, a silver medallist at the 2015 & 2017 RHS London Spring Shows.

Colin gave a wide-ranging and well illustrated presentation of plants suited to shade and semi-shade; he helpfully provided a list of the plants included in his talk.

Here are a few of his additional comments:

Narcissus ‘Jenny’ - tolerates shade, where its white petals stand out.

Cardiocrinum giganteum – a giant lily for semi-shade, planted in drifts at Wakehurst. After flowering, the bulb divides into small pieces and it can take 4-5 years to flower again.

Lilium martagon (Turk’s cap lily) – good impact in partial shade.

Arum italicum – love/hate plant – remove seed heads to stop it spreading.

Anemone nemorosa – its dainty flowers belie its strong root system that enables it to compete well with nettles and brambles.

GROUND COVER

Geranium: G. magnificum

G. macrorrhizum – spreads and good weed suppressant, e.g. ‘*Ingwersens variety*’ & ‘*Spessart*’.

G. phaeum – a little more vigorous than macrorrhizum. e.g. ‘*Samobor*’.

G. nodosum: e.g. ‘*Fielding’s Folly*’, ‘*Whiteleaf*’.

Bergenia: Old varieties often look a mess. However, there are many newer varieties with clear coloured flower spikes held above the leaves, which can also provide colour, particularly in autumn.

Epimedium: for old varieties it is best to cut down foliage before flowering starts, otherwise the leaves can mask the flowers.

However, many new varieties have been introduced over the past 20 years that spread less and are more upright, with the flowers standing above the foliage.

E. grandiflorum has introduced a range of new colours.

Omphalodes – is less of a thug when planted in shade.

Brunnera: the most popular variety has been ‘*Jack Frost*’; however, ‘*Looking Glass*’ is a worthwhile alternative.

Pulmonaria: ‘*Ice Ballet*’ is a much better white form than ‘*Bressingham White*’, more perennial. ‘*Blue Ensign*’ is very good. Pulmonarias can be susceptible to mildew in dry weather – best to cut back affected plants, so they can regrow when conditions become more moist.

Heuchera: Heucherella, the cross with Tierella, produces much better flowers.

Lily of the Valley: Can be difficult to establish. Best moved in clumps, rather than individual plants.

Polygonatum (Solomon’s Seal): The variety ‘*Betberg*’ has new leaves that are chocolate coloured.

Aquilegia: can be susceptible to downy mildew; any affected plants should be dug up and disposed of.

Lamium orvala – a tall deadnettle, standing to 18” high.

OTHERS

Corydalis – recommended in pots.

Actea – needs moisture.

Thalictrum – will not tolerate too much shade.

Rogersia – good new foliage; needs moisture.

Persicaria - variety '*Red Dragon*' unusual for its red/brown foliage.

Silene fimbriata - a campion with frilly white petals.