

Singing the Praises of Gardening in the Shade

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As we are carried along with the movement of the shifting seasons, I'm especially grateful if our winter has been white and/or/wet providing plentiful or at least adequate moisture for the coming year.

Between snowfalls of late winter here in Santa Fe, I've walked in the woods up by our reservoir discovering a remnant of last season, in its leafless rose grey velvety stalk and pendant blossoms hardened now into berried bells, the Pinedrop, *Pterospora andromedea* protected under towering Ponderosas and Douglas Firs. Looking up close at its form and texture, its unusual color given the setting, I start to see both the harmony and contrast of these materials together in the shaded woods, appreciating how they accentuate each others' beauty.

In autumn, we can experience this vividly when the deep green spiring evergreens pierce the buttery foliage of the changing Aspens. Deciduous woods display a natural alliance of trees, understory, shrubs, vines, plants and groundcovers. Features are weighted; land forms, stones, trees and shrubs create enclosure, provide protection and favor mutually beneficial plant communities, as for example Aspens with 'Golden Banner' (*Thermopsis*).

This visual cohesiveness is appealing, rhythmic, patterned. Distilling these elements while noticing scale, proportion, how a stone lies, the dappled, soft, yet clear light falling into the forest floor and her rivers, the movement from one grouping of plants to the next, distributing numerous shades of soothing viridian, we can begin to unravel our sense of the forest, a feel for the woods. As these feelings and observations percolate and inspire us, we can experiment with this naturalistic aesthetic in our own shade gardens. Roused from the cloak of winter, by the verge of spring I'm eager to be in the garden.

Not all shade is created equal. Judith Phillips in *Natural by Design* informs, "Shaded and wind protected microclimates along northeast and east facing walls, moderate conditions to simulate higher elevation ecosystems." Full shade conditions exist in areas under trees and conifers with tight branch patterns and dense foliage. The canopy of these trees can act like a giant umbrella diverting water, so often the soil under these trees is dry. Full shade can be on the north side of structures where direct sun from October to early

April never reaches and often the ground stays frozen for a longer period.

Trees, shrubs and evergreens with a more open pattern to the branches and foliage, permit sunlight to move through them creating the play of shadow and texture in a partially shady habitat. Or a site facing east with morning sun and afternoon shade, creates a similar condition. Here in Santa Fe given our lower latitude and higher altitude, coupled with intense solar radiation, reflected light responds as well like partial shade. And then there is always variation within these, areas close to the home which go in shadow earlier or under deciduous trees open to winter sun, but under full canopy during summer. Many of our bulbs, that receive a wee bit of glory then bow out early, or most materials that manage in full shade and are well mulched, will accommodate this type of environment.

I have put together a few lists of materials applicable to these situations, including trees for shade and plants for dry shade. Lauren Springer, one of the west's most innovative designers, has a dry shade list of perennials in *Undaunted Garden* which is very helpful. (To view shade lists contact aquaciaobella@yahoo.com) Partial shade is ideal for a wide range of materials. Some partial shade lovers tucked in behind large stones or larger plants, yet facing south, perform just fine. It's all about microenvironments, many materials like their roots cool and shaded with their tops in more light. Experience teaches us to see the difference in behavior between plants that love shade or are shade tolerant. What might take sun or drier shade in areas of Colorado, may need more shade or moisture in Santa Fe.

Walking along shaded paths in our local forest, we can see in a relatively crowded setting, materials competing well for nutrients. Some of the factors contributing to this adaptability include geology and rock type, air movement, moisture, deep and cool root run and plant association. Recently I read that in one acre of mixed deciduous forests the annual fall of 1-1 1/2 tons of leaves/litter, creates a layer of organic matter which, as it decomposes replenishes the loamy soil with particles small enough to hold nutrients and moisture, yet large enough to drain freely. To mirror these conditions while attempting to offer this integrity to our shade gardens, our soils will benefit from cultivation, opening and aerating the soil creating more porosity and good tilth, taking care to avoid root disturbance around established or shallow rooted trees. It is essential to incorporate high quality compost. We use Bio-Dynamic compost, appropriate amendments and when available 2-3 inches of leaf mold (half decomposed appropriate leaves; shredding will quicken the breakdown). The BD compost method brings together the optimum opportunity for the organic matter to be more thoroughly digested which influences the formation of a stabilized humus. This humus can then help in sustaining the soil's vitality by storing nutrients and moisture, mellowing and

balancing the alkalinity of our soils. It also enables a greater receptivity for unavailable minerals to find an available form. A thick mulch buffers temperature extremes and helps retain moisture and soil coolness. I encourage clients to renew each season with Bio-Dynamic compost, sensible pruning to insure a more open canopy with balanced proportion and use of shredded leaf mold and/ or other mulch.

Along the Rocky Mountain range our weather is rarely calm, especially in the unpredictable spring with blizzards possible till May. The aridness and bumpy topography create a lot of wind. Often shade environments are close to our homes or include other structures, trees, shrubs and boulders to temper this impact and provide shelter. Their selection and siting help link the garden both with our surroundings and homes while providing character and ambience. In the shade garden these elements offer structure and framework for the constellation of materials. It is wise to group plants that are compatible in cultural and moisture needs.

Materials comfortable in shade generally concentrate bloom time to coincide with the maximum availability of light when trees are just leafing out. Spring coaxes carpets of bashful welcoming bulbs offering an early season visual unity. Many are perfect candidates to be under deciduous trees with their shady canopy in summer when the bulbs go dormant. This penchant for spring flowering is shared among the snowy white elegant forms of Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis/elwesii*), pools of belled Snowflakes (*Leucojum aestivum*), violet blue starry Glory of the Snow (*Chionodoxa sardinsis*) amidst cobalt blue *Scilla siberica* 'Spring Beauty'. Brent of *Brent and Becky's Bulbs* tells that the antique (1597) fragrant and perky, canary yellow stoloniferous tulip 'Sylvestris', thrives in partial shade.

As with plants and shrubs, full shade lovers will tolerate partial shade, however the reverse is rarely true. *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, *Allium triquetrum* and autumn flowering *Cyclamen hederifolium* and the mottled leaved *C. purpurascens* are a few bulbs managing in drier partial shade. Daffodils, their fragrance wafting on a warm breeze, prefer dappled light. The reflexed petals of Cyclamineus varieties – 'Jenny', 'Jack Snipe', 'Kaydee' and 'Surfside'; or the *Triandrus* sort – 'Ice Wing', 'Thalia' or 'Stint' and 'Poeticus Angel Eyes' and 'Felindre', are all beguiling with azure blue flowered, spotted or variegated *Comfrey*, *Pulmonarias* or *Brunneras*. A fey fairy of flower, checkered violet maroon and white *Fritillaria melegris* with tumbling *Phlox divaricata* beneath, appreciates a little more moisture and good drainage.

Along with budding trees, shrubs, broad carpets of bulbs, early perennials unfold their new foliage. In shady borders near our homes, we can appreciate the delicate array of forms, subtle textures and soft coloring of dangling, unfurling blossoms and leaves, while inhaling fresh alluring fragrances from blossoms, air and earth. The coolness and moisture in

the soil (more so in areas of Colorado where the clay soils hold moisture) allow many a long, often overlapping flowering period.

Generally, it is the grouping of materials with rhythmic distribution of contrasting shapes and colors that sustains the design and develops its character. The size of these groupings should relate to the size of the garden. Layering the planting directs the eye from tree canopy to ground level harmoniously. Applicable elements of layering include existing structures, scale, proportion, density of groupings, shape, color and extended seasonal interest, while leaving room for spontaneity. Featuring diffuse transparent plants with more defined ones is useful too.

Choosing plants with good foliage carries the shade garden beyond bloom. Shape is especially relevant to foliage, useful in the front and middle ground for repetition, creating rhythm while including bold leaves for punctuation. Sculptural *Bergenia cordifolia* contrasts well with frothy flowered *Aster divaricatus* and linear *Calamagrotis acutiflora* 'Overdam'. Or the delicate texture of apple green Woodruff leaves (*Galium odoratum*) laced with clusters of tiny stars, emphasize the bold blue of *Hosta* 'Hadspen Blue'. Artful scattering of key plants or plant shapes, loose groups of spires or plumes, keeps the design unified and increases a sense of spaciousness across the width and depth of your garden. Variegation in leaves or as a background to white/pastel clumps can also add coherence and rhythm.

In the softly illuminated light and closer viewing, we can showcase an overlay of textural surfaces. Some examples include: polished Wild Ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) shining beneath the linear, matte leaves of Japanese Forest Grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureloa'); variegated *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Langtrees' with white, ferny Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra eximia*).

Color can help link the garden to the architecture. It reflects the theme and creates atmosphere, eliciting excitement and delight; whites shimmer, blues are luminous and chartreuse greens are like pools of sunlight. In early spring, match bronze-red with cool blues; claret *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* with lavender-blue *Phlox divaricata*, *Euphorbia dulcis* 'Chamelon' with *Scilla siberica* 'Spring Beauty' for a real zing. The varying densities and distribution of color can anchor and give structure to the garden. Related, complementary and mirrored shapes associated by color can bring a naturalness to the composition. *Rosa glauca* with *Papaver orientale* 'Patty's Plum', (Figure 1) soft yellow *Epimedium* flowers with gentian blue *Corydalis elata* or *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Langtrees' with *Lamium maculatum* 'White Nancy'. Form and color lead the eye around the garden.

Grasses offer both evergreen and structural continuity by adding framework, contrasting and accenting horizontals and

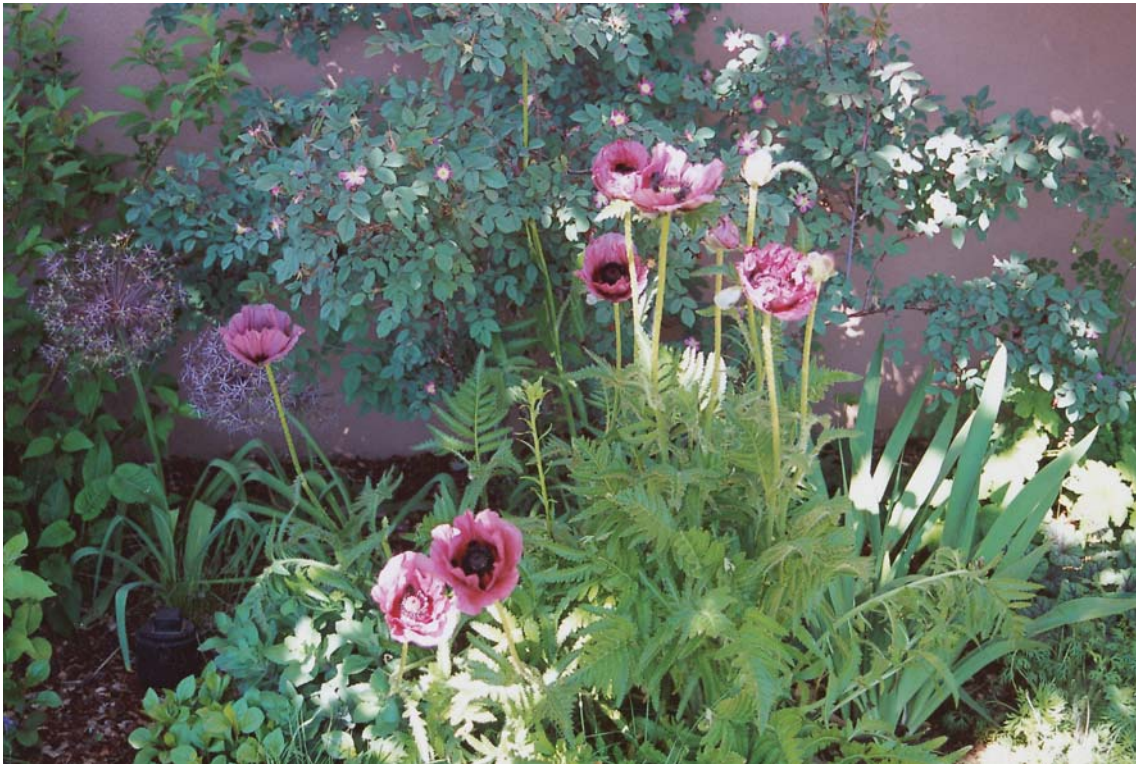


Figure 1. *Rosa glauca* with *Papaver orientale*, Patty's Plum and *Allium christophii*.

other verticals, and yet remain transparent. They animate movement and lend a harmonizing naturalness. Selections to consider for a range of shade include: Japanese Forest Grass, Carexes, Wild Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), (Figure 2) and variegated *Miscanthus*, while short tussocks as *Deschampsia caespitosa* 'Northern Lights' and *D. flexuosa*, *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens', *Luzula sylvatica*, *Melica* and *Sesleria* are fine accents. Light and movement go together in the play of shadow and even in dappled light, attentive siting highlights the grasses ephemeral qualities. Although not a grass, when Foxgloves are caught in a shaft of light, they become translucent against the shadowed background. Weavers like Panicums, Molinas and Thalictiums, add depth and surprise so all is not viewed at once.

In a wide sense, taking our cue from nearby forests while developing familiarity and experience with cultural needs of plants, experimenting with convivial neighbors and accenting contrasts, we just might evolve a nature inspired aesthetic equipped with resources for designing and growing our sylvan gardens to our hearts delight.

The following designs are a few possibilities. With these installations, it is a given that shade tolerant sedums will always be included.

Before it leafs out in the spring, the Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) blossoms with red-violet clusters borne along its grey stems. It can manage in full shade, although the design



Figure 2. Wild Oats, *Chasmanthium latifolium*.

developed here is best in partial shade. *Viburnum burkwoodii* 'Dawn' or *V. carlesii* 'Korean Spice', upright Quince 'Toyo-Nishiki' (*Chaenomeles speciosa*), or apricot 'Cameo', would all be enchanting with a backdrop of *Clematis montana* (Figure 3) clothing a wall catching the morning sun. Alternatively, choose from the spicy fragrance of Currant 'Crandall' (*Ribes odoratum* Crandall), 'Mt. Ninebark' (*Physocarpus monogynus*) or autumn berrying Coralberry (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*) joined by Plumago (*Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*) and Autumn Crocus (*Colchium*). For a vertical evergreen accent try a Medora Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* 'Medora'). A tumbling blue Spruce, Blue Star Juniper (*Juniperus squamata* 'Blue Star' or variegated *Euonymus fortunei*) could accent a granite boulder. *Panicum virgatum* 'Dallas Blue' and 'Prairie Sky', shimmering *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Lights', bronze *Carex* or *Luzula sylvatica* 'Marginata' are grass options. Vines *Vitis vinifera* 'Purpurea' and Boston Ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata* var. *Veitchii*) lend shape and rich autumn color. At the foot of the currant, *Thalia* daffodils, the glistening lockets of Bermuda pink Bleeding Hearts (*Dicentra spectabilis* and *D. formosa* 'King of Hearts') join *Brunnera macrophylla* 'Albo-striata' or *Pulmonaria saccharata* 'Roy Davidison' enriching the mélange.

Slate grey-blue leaves of the *Rosa glauca* is companion for the Redbud and a beautiful backdrop for apricot Foxgloves (*Digitalis purpurea*), *Verbascum phoenicum*, *Cimicifuga racemosa* 'Atropurpurea', 'Meadow Rue' (*Thalictrum delavayi*) with 'Honesty' (*Lunaria annua* 'Albo-striatum') and *Narcissus poeticus* ('Angel Eyes') with some of this group drifting close to the trunk of the Redbud. Iceland Poppies (*Papaver nudicaule*), antique rose Violas, Veronica 'Waterperry Blue' and 'Samabor' geraniums (*Geranium*

phaeum) mingle with the violet *Verbascums*. The tall exotic looking spring bulb *Nectaroscordum* dangle among the rose's wild-like clear pink blossoms shining starry behind the plump buds of the femme fatal of Oriental Poppies, Patty's Plum (*Papaver orientale*) with its pale, dusky mulberry papery petals, skirted by *Geranium pratense*, 'Plenum Violaceum' or *Geranium pratense* 'Summer Skies' or *Geranium magnificum*. Instead of the Geranium, the ferny, mahogany leafed *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravens Wing' would flatter Patty's Plum, offering a swell cameo with ruby *Astrantia* or Columbine 'Ruby Port' (*Aquilegia vulgaris*) and Melica grasses, filling in for the poppies early dormancy. The azure blue of Campanulas or Balloon Flowers (*Platycodon*) would add a touch of soft coolness. The autumn scene finds drifts of the Meadow Rue, *Cimicifuga*, Japanese Anemone 'Hadspen Abundance' (*Anemone x hybrida* Hadspen Abundance), Aster and 'Ravens Wing' flowering between berrying shrubs.

In these photos, (Figure 4 and 5) which faces north-east and just in its first season, we planted shrubs *Rosa glauca*, variegated Dogwood (*Cornus alba* Argenteo Marginata), Beautyberry (*Callicarpa bodinieri* 'Profusion') with evergreen Blue Star Juniper (*Juniperus squamata*). The supporting cast of perennials and grasses are Coral Bells (*Heuchera sanguinea* 'Stormy Seas' and *H. americana* 'Green Spice'), *Carex buchananii*, *Geranium phaeum* 'Samabor', Bleeding Hearts (*Dicentra spectabilis* 'Alba' and *D. formosa*), Bistort (*Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Summer Dance'), Japanese Anemone 'Honorine Jobert' (*Anemone x hybrida* Honorine Jobert), Aster Lady in Black (*Aster lateriflorous*), annual *Nicotiana langsdorfii* and *Sedum* 'Vera Jameson'. The limey *Lysimachia mummularia* 'Aurea' offers groundcover contrast. Spring begins with *Fritterlaria*



Figure 3. *Clematis montana* Elizabeth



Figure 4. We included a five foot 'Burning Bush' (*Euonymus alata* 'Compactus') to compliment an established pink flowering crabapple (to which we added a large specimen of *Picea pungens* Prostrata) cascading over a sizable granite boulder on the east side of this portal looking north from the client's home. These photos display the new planting accenting both the existing crabapple and the architecture.

Figure 5. Close-up view of shady nook. Includes *Rosa glauca*, *Cornus alba* 'Argenteo Marginata', *Callicarpa bodinieri* 'Profusion', *Juniperus squamata* 'Blue Star', *Carex buchani*, *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Summer Dance', *Nicotiana langsdorfii*, *Anemone x hybrida*, Honorine Jobert, *Aster lateriflorous* Lady in Black, *Heuchera sanguinea* 'Stormy Seas' and *Geranium phaeum* 'Samabar'



melagrifolia and *Scilla siberica* ‘Spring Beauty’, while a little later, *Allium christophii* and *A. karataviense* come up by the Coral Bells. In the autumn, *Colchicum* flowers brilliantly under the Beautyberry.

Compatible to an east site, the American Smoketree (*Cotinus obovatus*) displays similar frothy plumes as the purple leafed variety and it glows embered in autumn. Native Acers or *Prunus* are effective as a backdrop. An upright or conical blue evergreen would be a shapely counterpoint, especially with the change of colors. Choices of shrubs might include: Currant (*Ribes*) Rock Spirea (*Holodiscus dumosus*), Fernbush (*Chamaebatiaria millefolium*), or as pictured here (Figures 6) facing north, with a Sumac (*Rhus typhina* ‘Laciniata’). The grasses *Panicum virgatum* (‘Rehbraun’ and ‘Shenendoah’) are cohorting with *Fescue amethystina*, *Carex buechananii* and *Chasmanthium latifolium* (Wild Oats). A few other possibilities with grasses could be *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Miscanthus sinensis*, ‘Punktchen’ or *Sorghastrum nutans* ‘Sioux Blue’ (delicious with *Atriplex hortensis* var. *rubra*). Perennials mingling with the Sumac are *Euphorbia polychroma*, *Geranium macrorrhizum/cantabrigiense*, *Ruta*, *Verbascum* (‘Helen Johnson’), *Diascia integerrima* (‘Pink Adobe’), *Amsonia hubrichtii*, *Aster lateriflorous* ‘Lady in Black’ and *Aster oblongifolius*. In developing another grouping, we could feature Lauren’s Grape Opium Poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) with the frothy plumes of *Filipendula rubra* ‘Venusta’ and the matte leaves of Plume Poppy (*Macleaya cordata*) shapely with willow *Amsonia illustris* and *Aster Lady in Black*. Meanwhile,

Clematis tangutica ‘Bill MacKenzie’ winds through the Sumac. In spring, drifts of *Scilla siberica* could join the *Euphorbia* or *Triandrus* Daffodil ‘Katie Keath’ or ‘Ice Wings’ with *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, Pasque flowers (*Pulsatilla vulgaris*) and orange Iceland Poppies (*Papaver nudicaule*). By early summer *Eremurus* ‘Cleopatra’ bulbs would really inspire.

Another resilient tree or grove for these exposures is the Oak. They are excellent wind buffers while also capable of drawing on deep water reserves. Bur (*Quercus macrocarpa*), Texas Red Oak (*Quercus buckleyi*) and its most western representative, *Q. gravesii*, plus *Q. gambellii* are reliable choices. The Gambel Oak (*Quercus gambellii*) is the choice for this design and is pruned in a multi-stem tree form. In our area, it is reported to grow from 1-3 ft a year. A few shrubs associating well here include, Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia* ‘Regent’), Currant (*Ribes*), Waxflower (*Jamesia americana*), Beauty Bush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*) and Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula* and *A. coloradoensis*), which is better on a berm. Plus a berried rose like *Rosa glauca* or fragrant Hybrid Musk ‘Darlow’s Enigma’ with *Ruta*, *Digitalis obscura*, shade Asters (the lobed, gray-green oak-shaped leaves of the Plume Poppy could be good), *Persicaria affinis* ‘Border Jewel’, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Briza media* and Plumbago. For a later show, dry shade adaptable, tubular and speckled *Campanula punctata* ‘Cherry Bells’ could join the *Digitalis*. While a naturalized vignette features Woods Rose (*Rosa woodsii*), *Mahonia repens* with *Iberis* ‘Daglori Gem’ or



Figure 6.

'Little Gem' and *Penstemon* 'Claude Barr' (*Penstemon caespitosus*) weaving through the planting. *Fescue glauca* 'Border Blue' would pair well with the Manzanita. Wild Oats turns the same tawny parchment color as the late autumn Oak leaves; while Feather Reed Grass (*Calamagrotis acutiflora* 'Overdam') would compliment the ruby berried roses. An Autumn Clematis (*Clematis terniflora*) could twine on boughs of Oak or along with Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia* var. *englemanni*) (Figure 7) and Honeysuckles (*Lonicera*), adorn a wall or fence. Lastly,



Figure 7. These vining plants perform well in partial shade. They include *Humulus lupulus* 'Aureus' with *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* var. *englemanni*, *Lonicera pericyclumenum Serotina* and *Rosa* 'Zepherine Drouhin'.

the scolloed buds of *Cyclamen purpurascens* or *C. heredifolium* nestled into the Oak, would create a Venetian tapestry.

Sited among native Junipers and Pines, radiant with Maples, along a north-east exposure, a grove of Aspens (*Populus tremuloides*) glistening gold in the autumn is certainly a Rocky Mountain high. Accenting the Aspens several boulders showcase drifts of spring blooming *Daphne*

burkwoodii ('Carol Mackie' or 'Silveredge') with its variegated grey-green with cream leaves and pink buds opening to fragrant stars, carpeted with Woodruff and Lilies of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*). Blue Flag Irises (*Iris missouriensis*), classic Rocky Mt. Columbines (*Aquilegia caerulea*) and pinky Robin (Songbird series) with *Verbascum phoeniceum* 'Violetta' would be a great alliance. An autumn combo could feature Tufted or Crinkled Hair Grass (*Deschampsia caepitosa* or *D. flexuosa*) or the dangling panicles of Wild Oats among trunks of the turning Aspens; *Aster divaricatus* with Snowberry 'Amethyst' (*Symphoricarpos*), Virginia Creeper or the dramatic architecture of the Crimson Glory Vine (*Vitis coignetiae*). Evergreen suggestions applicable to both designs are dwarf Spruces, *Microbiota desussata*, *Mahonia repens* or Kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* Massachusetts). In another grouping shrub choices might be; Currants, Waxflower, *Rosa eleganteria* and especially Rock Spirea (*Holodiscus dumosus*) with *Euonymus fortunei* 'Emerald Gaiety' and golden Hops (*Humulus lupulus* 'Aureus'), which if positioned in dappled shade features Columbine 'Ruby Port' (*Aquilegia vulgaris*) with 'Ravens Wing' (*Anthriscus sylvestris*). (Figure 8) In early spring nestled between the



Figure 8. *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravens Wing' with *Aquilegia vulgaris* 'Ruby Port'.

Aspens and Roses, night fragrant, mauve ‘Dame’s Rocket’ (*Hesperis matronalis*) jostle with *Euphorbia amygdaloides* ‘Rubra’, while lavender *Phlox divaricata* combine with apricot Foxgloves and violet Verbasiums, melding with *Rosa eglanteria*, which is backed by Burning Bush ‘Grove’ (*Euonymus alatus* ‘Grove Compact’). Later in the autumn, this ensemble is highlighted by Japanese Anemones, *Aster divaricatus* and Boston Ivy, or variegated Porcelain Vine (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata* ‘Elegans’).

A beautifully graceful tree for a northeast site with ample protection from wind and moderate watering needs, is the Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*). They are elegant in combination with flowering Cherries and with a backdrop of a weeping blue Atlas Cedar (*Cedar atlantica* ‘Glaucous Pendula’), Crimson Glory Vine and *Clematis montana* ‘Elizabeth’. Native Maples could be included, along with a hardy Witch Hazel (*Hamamelis*), Rosemary Willow (*Salix elegans*) or red and yellow twiggled Dogwoods off in the distance (underplanted with variegated *Carex* ‘Evergold’). *Picea*, *Abies* ‘Acrocona’, Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea* ‘Nana’), *Abies koreana* ‘Starker’s Dwarf’ or dwarf Pines (plus Hemlocks in some areas in Colorado), offer compatible evergreen possibilities. Grasses offer winter texture and options might be, *Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Little Dot’ or ‘Morning Light’, Wild Oats, *Carex*, Japanese Forest Grass (*Hakonechloa macra*) or the hardy 6 foot clumping Bamboo *Fargesia Rufa* with *Peony tenuifolia*, and Siberian Iris or *Corydalis ochroleuca*. Among rounded stone, groundcovers such as *Sedum cauticola* ‘Cape Blanco’, Epimediums, *Fragaria vesca* with *Campanula cochelariifolia*, Lilies of the Valley and pools of Spanish Bluebells may flourish. Fall approaches with white Japanese anemones, fall Asters with Autumn Clematis or late blooming large flowered Clematis and Boston Ivy covering walls or fences. In the low stones near the edge of the Maple, the heart shaped leaves of Wild Ginger glistens beneath Japanese Forest Grass, backed by the demure soft apricot Daylily ‘Golden Chimes’ (*Hemerocallis*) and ‘Ruby Port’ Columbine, Coral Bells (*Heuchera americana* ‘Green Spice’) and Bleeding Hearts.

The lovely white flowered Serviceberry displays an irregular outline and offers a striking contrast with the more geometric lines of contemporary design and architecture (pruned in a multi-stem tree form). A spring underplanting of Honesty (*Lunaria annua* Albo-striatum) with *Narcissus poeticus* ‘Felindre’ and *Cyclamineus Kaydee*, Lilies of the Valley, sky blue with white edged Violas, dwarf blue and white Columbines and *Geranium phaeum* ‘Album’, is worth the try. A bolder theme might favor *Brunnera macrophylla* Alba-striata, *Lamium maculatum* ‘White Nancy’ with the arching stems which hold the waxy white flowers dangling from Solomon’s Seal (*Polygonatum multiflorum* ‘Variegatum’), Formosa lily (*Lilium formosanum* var. priceii), Molina (*Molina caerulea* ssp. a. Transparent) and Aster Lady in Black. Boston Ivy or Honeysuckle with *Clematis* ‘Perle d’Azur’ or

‘Lady Northcliff’ could grace a wall, or in the case of the *Clematis*, adorn a tripod.

Many of these designs are composed with an exuberant mix of flora. However the simpler, more discerning the design the more tranquil the garden atmosphere. For a cluster, grove or orchard, selecting a single species of tree and an understory of one kind of grass or shade loving shrub or vine would be an example of this approach. The repetition of leaf and flower and arching branches help create this quieter atmosphere.

Photos are by the author. An abbreviated version of this manuscript originally appeared in Colorado Gardener, April 2006.

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Figure 9. *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata* ‘Elegans’ a striking variegated vine for partial shade with unusual speckled variegated blues in the berries come fall.



Figure 10. *Philadelphus* x *Snowbelle*, *Dicentra spectabilis* 'Alba', *Euphorbia amygdaloides* 'Rubra', *Geranium magnificum*, *Sedum* 'Vera Jameson', leaves of *Anemone* x *hybrida* 'Koenigen Charlotte' *Heuchera* 'Amethyst Mist', Irises 'Batik', 'Calico Cat', 'Plum Lucky' and 'Dot.com', *Ruta graveolens* and *Veronica* 'Waterperry Blue'



Figure 11. *Populus tremuloides*, *Rosa glauca*, *Cornus alba* 'Siberica', *Picea pungens* 'Prostrata', *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Albo-rosea', *Papaver orientale* 'Patty's Plum', *Allium christophii*, *Phlox subulata* 'Oakington Blue', *Viola corsica*, *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides* and *Heuchera americana* 'Green Spice'.