List of Herbacious Native Plants for the Shade Garden

Compiled by Beate Popkin

Short (less than 1’ tall)

\*Allegheny spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*) spreads slowly to form evergreen groundcover cover

\*Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense)* spreads slowly to make ground cover, flowers are early and hidden

\*Celandine poppy (*Stylophorum dyphillum)* benefits from having leaves cut off in early to mid-summer

Bellwort or merrybells (*Uvularia grandiflora*), needs some moisture

\*Jacob’s ladder (*Polemonium caeruleum*) light blue flowers in spring, clumping, self-seeds some

Woodland phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), spreads when happy

\*Woodland creeping phlox (*Phlox stolonifera*) also spreads when happy, cultivars available

\*Foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia)* tolerates fairly deep shade

\*Golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*) needs some moisture, spreads fast when happy

Dwarf iris (*Iris cristata)*sweet in spring when it blooms, leaves can look ratty in summer

Dutchman’s breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*) pretty white to cream flowers but unstable foliage

Squirrel corn (*Dicentra* c*anadensis)* similar to above, but it is a distinct species

Stonecrop (*Sedum* *ternatum*) dry sites, pavement edges

\*Purple Phacelia (*Phacelia bipinnatifida)* bi-annual, tolerates dry conditions, self-seeds profusely

Native bleeding heart (*Dicentra eximina)* spring to early summer flowering

Sedges, cut back after flowering, though some have interesting seed structure

Wild geranium (*Geranium maculata*) benefits from some sun, cut off flower stalks in mid summer

\*Coral bells (*Heuchera)* many cultivars, some with good flowers, but grown mostly for foliage

\*Dittany (*Cunila origanoides*), tolerates dry conditions but likes some sun

True ephemerals

Trout Lily

Bloodroot, leaves may persist through summer

Twinleaf, leaves may persist through summer

Rue anemone

Toothwort

\*Virginia bluebells

Dwarf larkspur

\*Mayapples

Medium height

Solomon’s seal (spreads)

False Solomon’s seal (*Smilacina racemosa*)

Heart-leaf aster, strong self seeder as is the similar Short’s aster

Columbines

\*Indian pink, benefits from some sun, can get too much water

Spiderwort, afternoon sun, cut back in mid-summer to prevent self-seeding

Short-toothed mountain mint, tolerates sun, great pollinator plant, spreads

Black-eyed susan, the more sun, the better it blooms

\*Bluestem goldenrod, takes on shrub-like appearance when mature, needs space

Elm-leaf goldenrod, might be more upright in sun

Turtlehead, pink or white, needs some moisture, blooms in August

\*White snakeroot (*Eupatorium rugosum* ‘Chocolate’) self-seeds vigorously

\*Wood aster (*Aster divaricata)*, long stems but they lie down making this a short plant

Virginia knotweed (*Persicaria virginiana)*, spreads

\*Autumn fern

Tall

Pale sunflower (*Helianthus divaricatus)*

Blue bellflower

Garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata*), blooms best in sun

\*Red Lobelia, needs moisture, does not always grow tall

Spikenard, shrub like

A few beautiful and useful non-natives

certain geraniums

\*Epimedium

\*Brunera

Toad lily, median height, needs moisture

\*European bleeding-heart, median height, ephemeral