

Want Shade?

By Sally Hanrahan

Shade in Nevada can be somewhat elusive unless you go to the mountains. Yes, we have trees here in the city; but, with more homeowners misunderstanding the xeriscape concept, finding a cool oasis can be a challenge. Did you know that planting a few trees is one of the most important things you can do when you buy a new home or move into an existing one?

Trees...

clean the air

shade your home in summer, saving on cooling costs

protect your home from wind in the winter, saving on heating costs

screen unwanted views

provide shade & privacy

USDA Forest Service Pamphlet #R1-92-100 (based on 1992 calculations) states that over a 50 year lifetime a tree will . . .

generate \$31,250 of oxygen

provide \$62,000 worth of air pollution control

recycle \$31,250 worth of soil control.

And, upgrading your landscape with big trees can increase your home's value.

Trees planted on the south or west side help cool your home in summer -- maples have a thick canopy deep shade, while honeylocust will offer dappled shade. Evergreens work well on the north and east sides and provide a green backdrop year round; both spruces and Austrian pines will make a good wind break. Japanese maples are perfect for a focal point in a space with early morning sun and afternoon shade

In addition to planting trees, consider these ideas for creating your own shady retreat.

- Add an outdoor room to your home with a pergola and create shade. Plant vines like grape or wisteria to soften the structure.
- Hydrangeas, viburnum, hollies, pieris, rhododendrons and azaleas make wonderful plantings and add color and texture in shaded areas of large trees.

- Shade perennials offer a wide variety of color and leaf texture not found in annuals; while they bloom only for a few weeks, when planted in succession, they'll provide continuous color. Coral bells, hosta, astilbe, columbine, primrose, ferns, bleeding heart, ajuga, hellobores, sweet woodruff, hakonechloa grass, pachysandra, campanulas, and violas are among the many shade perennials that thrive in northern Nevada.
- Annuals will provide continual bloom all summer and into the fall. Some great shade annuals are coleus, impatiens, begonias and fuschias – all of which come in a variety of colors and shapes.
- For a focal point, a colorful pot can be planted with shrubs, perennials and annuals, or be left empty.

Want shade? Visit your local garden center to find the plants that are best-suited to your specific micro-climate and soil.