

Shade Gardening

Ann Geyer, LCMGA



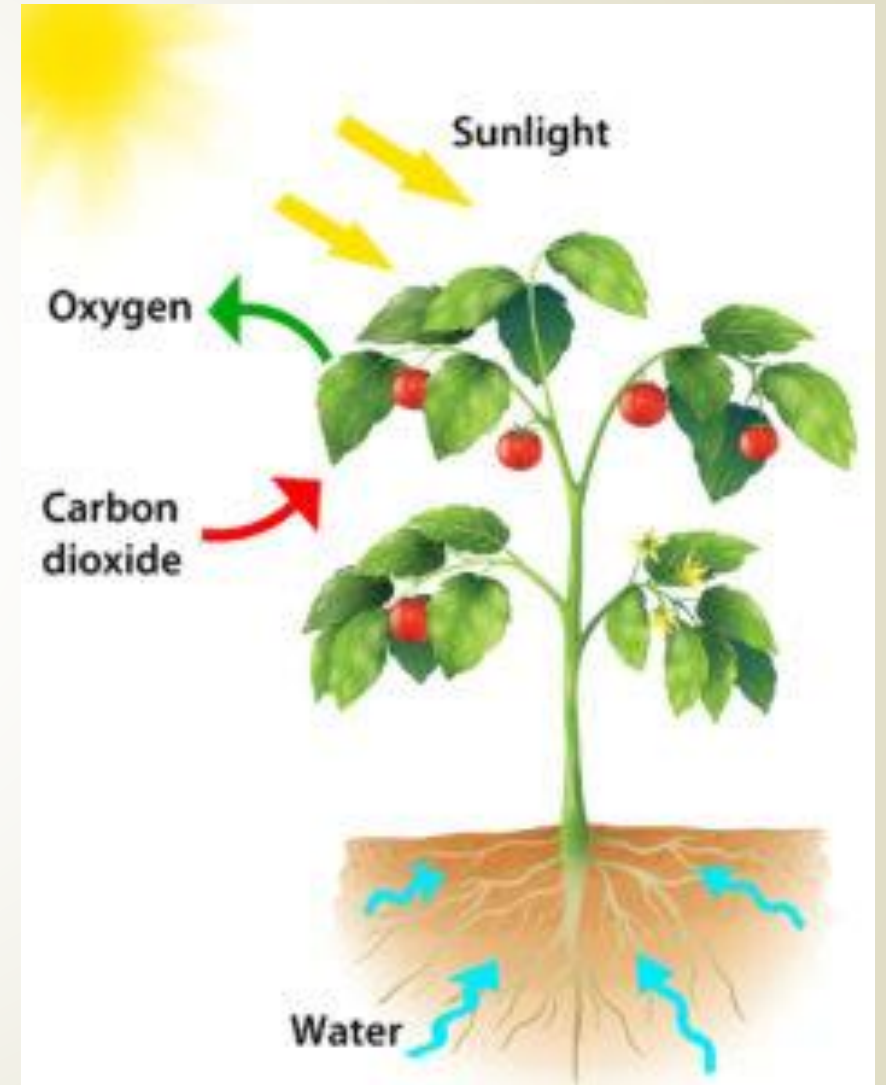
Topics

- Shade Garden Basics
- Design Tips and Examples
- Plant Lists

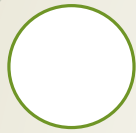
All plants need some sun

► Photosynthesis

- Plants convert sunlight into energy
- Energy splits water (H_2O) into hydrogen and oxygen molecules
- Hydrogen and carbon dioxide form glucose (sugar) to fuel plant growth
- Oxygen is released into air as a byproduct



Plants are rated for their sun/shade requirements



Full sun

- > 6 hrs of direct sunlight (overhead)



Full shade

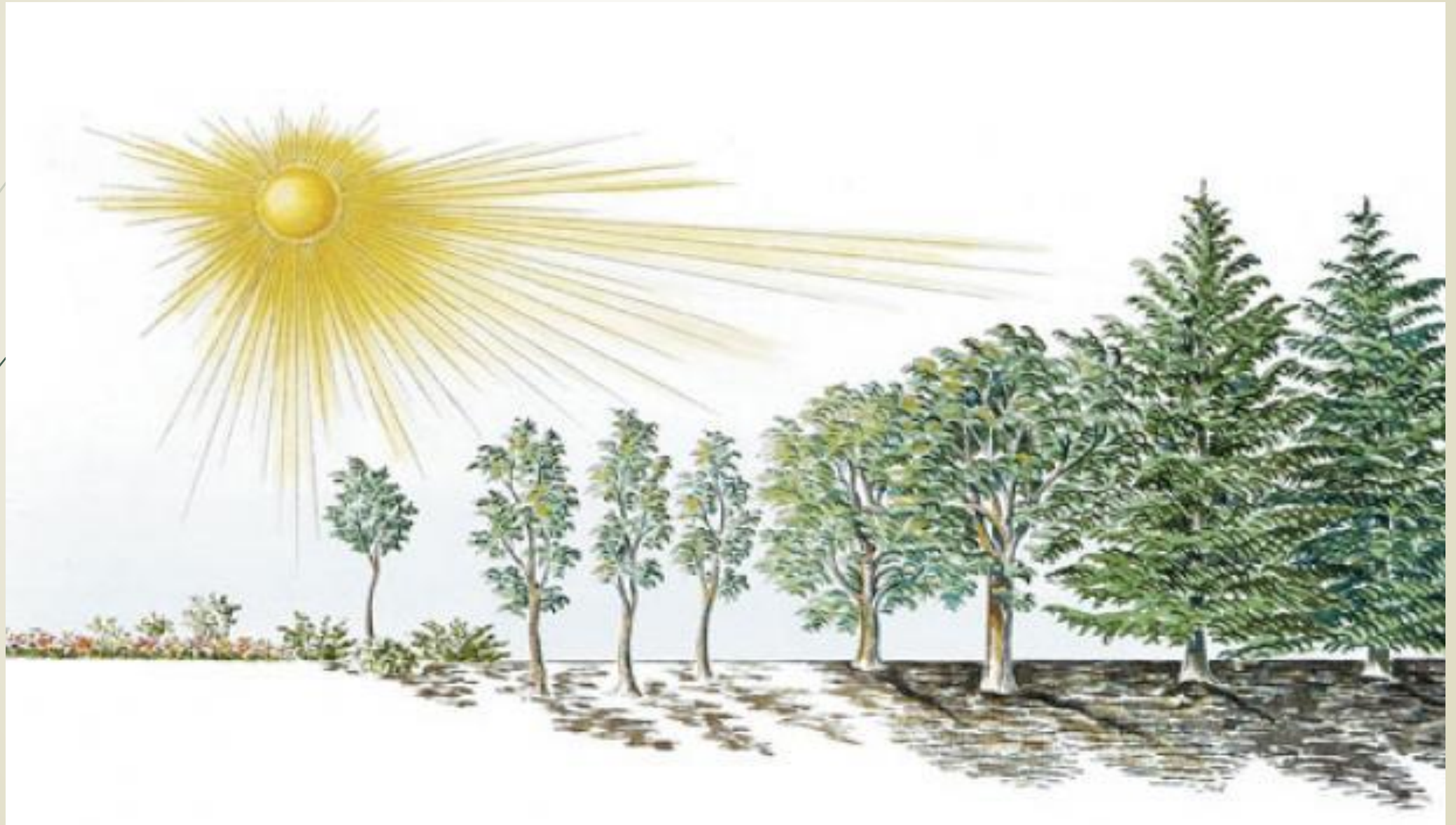
- < 3 hrs of direct sunlight



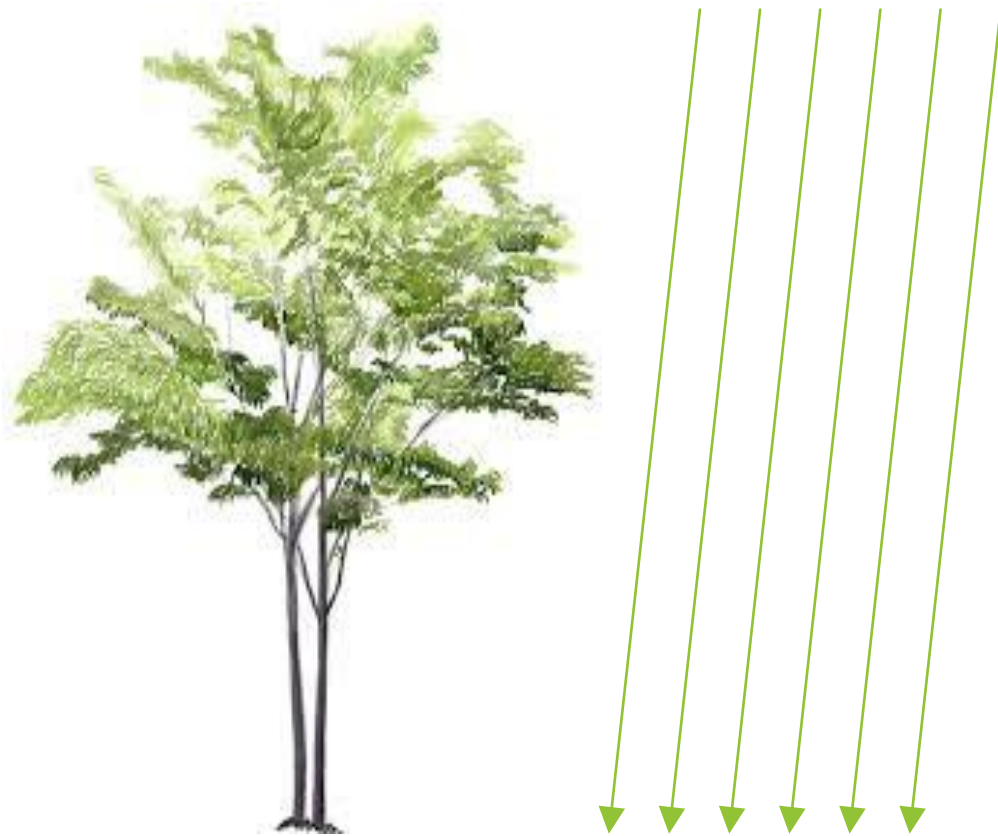
Partial sun/partial shade

- 3 -6 hrs of direct sunlight with protection from mid-day overhead sun
- Other terms: dappled, filtered, reflected, light, open

Density of trees serves as a gauge for degrees of light and shade.



Seasonal Changes



Summer direct sunlight



Winter indirect sunlight











Shade plants adapt to limited sunlight

- ▶ Early spring blooms (ephemerals)
 - anemone and spring beauty
- ▶ Summer dormancy
 - trillium, bloodroot, and epimedium
- ▶ Large, flat leaf surfaces
 - umbrella leaf, hosta, and skunk cabbage
- ▶ Dissected leaves
 - ferns, aralias, and black cohosh

Soil Competition & Fertility

- ▶ Tree roots are most dense in top 12-18" of soil and will generally extend beyond the drip line
- ▶ More water and fertilizer produces more surface/feeder roots
- ▶ Spring, summer, and fall application of fertilizer is usually helpful
- ▶ Use containers for serious root competition situations
- ▶ Apply mulch and/or let canopy litter remain in place



Dry or wet shade

- ▶ Canopy can deflect water from underlying areas
 - Doug fir and western cedar are particularly bad
- ▶ Tree roots can absorb most of the available water
 - Use dry shade plants or supplemental irrigation
- ▶ Moisture can attract disease and pests
 - Space plants for good air circulation

Design Tips

- ▶ Personal tastes dictate
- ▶ Focus on foliage and texture
- ▶ Emphasize combinations and contrasts
- ▶ Color lightly
- ▶ Increase plant scale



Differing textures





**Differing leaf
size**



Focal Points

- Color
- Large leaves
- Hardscape



Focal Points

- Leaf sizes
- Decorative items
- Color



Color & Texture from foliage

- golden meadow rue
- anemone
- purple-leaf coralbells
- big-leaf umbrella plant



Plant Bright Colors

- hostas
- Japanese forest grass
- duetzia



Don't Forget Groundcovers

- Sweet woodruff
- Wild ginger
- Bunchberry (native)
- Lilly turf
- Vancouveria (native)
- Piggyback (native)
- Lamium
- Ajuga
- Self-heal (native)
- Epimedium



Contrasts

- dark wood chips
- white-variegated perennials
- ornamental grasses
- golden groundcovers



Flowering Shrubs

- Can add color, texture, and height
- Evergreens give winter color
- Deciduous for bark color and changing leaf color

- Rhododendrons
- Azaleas
- Red flowering currant







Recap

- ▶ Plant right up to tree trunks for most natural look
- ▶ Use small plants the closer you get to trees or other root shrubs
- ▶ Forget the shovel use a trowel or hori-hori
- ▶ Dig individual holes rather than whole beds
- ▶ Embrace ephemerals
- ▶ Don't forget groundcovers
- ▶ Start with a palette and a few key plants- use different combinations and repetitions; then branch out
- ▶ Repeat plants throughout the garden for cohesion/unity
- ▶ Splurge for your focal point—surprise factor
- ▶ Have patience

LCMGA Website

- ▶ orcoastmga.org
- ▶ Ask a gardening question
- ▶ Blog
- ▶ Educational events calendar