



Department of Horticulture

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service • West Lafayette, IN

Landscape Plants for Areas with Full Sun

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This publication lists and briefly describes landscape plants that are suitable for the specific site conditions of full sun. These lists can serve as a guide, but are not intended to be exhaustive. Many other plants may grow well in full sun conditions besides the ones on the list.

Winter survival is fundamental to success of perennial landscape plants. Indiana is divided into hardiness zones by the United States Department of Agriculture. Southern Indiana, from the Ohio River to approximately Bedford or Seymour, is in zone 6. The rest of the state is in zone 5. Select only plants from this list with a hardiness zone number equal to or lower than the zone for the location they will be planted. For example, in Muncie (zone 5), select plants listed for zone 5, 4, 3, or lower.

Areas of full sun may also be associated with dry soils. Such areas are frequently found on the south side of the house. To grow plants in dry soils, it is important that they develop a good root system so that plants can survive droughty periods.

Enriching the soil will help plants grow successfully in the dry soils found in sunny areas. Dig large planting holes, and add 1 part soil and 1 part peat moss plus 1 table-spoonful of fertilizer, such as 12-12-12 or similar analysis, per square foot. After planting, water the site thoroughly, and mulch the area. Mulches of black plastic, woodchips, or shredded bark will help retain moisture. Continue to provide water until plants are well established. For sunny areas, be sure to select plants which are adapted to such a location. The following plants will grow under sunny conditions.

NOTE: Herbaceous perennials die to the ground in winter and grow from the roots each spring. Protect these types of plants with mulches in winter. Herbaceous perennials are indicated by "HP" in the following tables.

Groundcovers and Vines for Full Sun

| Common Name Scientific Name | Height | Zone | Comments |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Actinidia, Bower <i>Actinidia arguta</i> | 30' | 5 | Rapidly growing vine with deciduous foliage. |
| Adam's-needle <i>Yucca smalliana</i> or <i>Y. filamentosa</i> | 2 1/2' | 4 | Clump-formed evergreen. Sword-shaped leaves. White, pendulous flowers on tall stalk in summer. |
| Bearberry, Common <i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> | less than 1" | 2 | Evergreen groundcover for acid soils. Bronze fall foliage and scarlet berries. Thrives in hot sun. |
| Bittersweet, American <i>Celastrus scandens</i> | 25' | 4 | Sun to partial shade. Twining vine. Yellow fall foliage with attractive orange berries on female plants. |
| Bush Clover <i>Lespedeza thunbergii</i> | 10' | 5 | Rosy-purple blooms in late summer. May be killed to the ground in winter. |
| Cotoneaster, Cranberry <i>Cotoneaster apiculatus</i> | 3' | 5 | Small, pink flowers followed by red berries. Susceptible to fireblight. |

| Common Name Scientific Name | Height | Zone | Comments |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Daylily, Orange <i>Hemerocallis</i> hybrids | 6' | 4-HP | Many colors, mid-summer blooms on 6-foot spikes. |
| Grape <i>Vitis</i> spp. | 8-10' | 6 | Many cultivars available. Edible fruits. Full sun. |
| Hydrangea, Climbing <i>Hydrangea anomala</i> var. <i>petiolaris</i> | 75' | 5 | Clinging vine. Large, white flower clusters in summer. Sun or partial shade. |
| Ivy, English <i>Hedera helix</i> | 6-8" (ground- cover) 60' (vine) | 5-6 | Clinging evergreen vine. Protect from winter sun and wind. Should have slightly moist soil. May climb via small, root-like appendages. |
| Juniper, Creeping <i>Juniperus horizontalis</i> | 1' | 3 | Many varieties available. Needled evergreen. |
| Juniper, Japanese 'Procumbens' <i>Juniperus chinensis</i> | 2' | 5 | Dense, needled evergreen. |
| Rose, Memorial <i>Rosa wichuraiana</i> | Hugs ground | 6 | Semi-evergreen foliage. Small, white flowers followed by red fruit. Stems root where they touch moist ground. |
| Stonecrop, Gold Moss <i>Sedum acre</i> | 5" | 3-HP | Succulent evergreen. Spreads by creeping and rooting stems. Yellow flowers in spring. Many other species of <i>Sedum</i> can be used in full sun. |
| Sumac, Fragrant <i>Rhus aromatica</i> | 8' | 3 | Small, yellow flowers appear before leaves. Fruits turn red in summer. Scarlet fall foliage. |
| Thyme, Common <i>Thymus vulgaris</i> | 6"-15" | 2 | Evergreen with aromatic foliage and flowers. |
| Trumpet Vine <i>Campsis radicans</i> | 30' | 5 | Clinging vine with orange flowers through summer. |
| Virginia Creeper <i>Parthenocissus</i> <i>quinquefolia</i> | 100' | 4 | Clinging vine. Brilliant red fall foliage. Small, blue fruits attract birds. |

Shrubs for Full Sun

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| Barberry, Japanese <i>Berberis thunbergii</i> | 5' | 4 | Many thorns. Will grow in shade. Profuse, yellow flowers followed by red berries. Many cultivars available. |
| Bayberry <i>Myrica pensylvanica</i> | 9' | 5 | Semi-evergreen. Gray berries fragrant when crushed. |
| Beach Plum <i>Prunus maritima</i> | 10' | 3 | Blue or red fruits. Prefers slightly acid soil. |

| Common Name Scientific Name | Height | Zone | Comments |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cotoneaster, Spreading <i>Cotoneaster divaricatus</i> | 6' | 5 | Arching branches and many red berries. Red fall color. Susceptible to fireblight. |
| Cranberry Bush, European <i>Viburnum opulus</i> | 12' | 3 | Red fruit and red fall color. White spring flowers. Dwarf forms available. Invasive, not recommended in natural areas. |
| Firethorn <i>Pyracantha coccinea</i> | 6' | 7 | Semi-evergreen with bright orange berries. Susceptible to fireblight. |
| Juniper, Savin <i>Juniperus sabina</i> | 10' | 3 | Dark green, spreading evergreen. |
| Pine, Mugo <i>Pinus mugo</i> | 30' | 3 | Needled evergreen. Tolerates shearing. Low-growing cultivars available. |
| Privet, Amur <i>Ligustrum amurense</i> | 15' | 4 | Glossy, deciduous leaves. |
| Quince, Flowering <i>Chaenomeles speciosa</i> | 6-10' | 5 | White, pink to dark red flowers in spring. Thorns present. |
| Rose, Japanese <i>Rosa rugosa</i> | 6' | 2 | White or red flowers followed by red fruits. Orange fall color. |
| Sumac, Smooth <i>Phus glabra</i> | 20' | 3 | Shrubs or small trees good for naturalizing in hot, sunny areas. Scarlet fall color; interesting fruits. |
| Summer-sweet <i>Clethra alnifolia</i> | 10' | 5 | Fragrant mid-summer flowers. Attractive fall foliage. |
| Wayfaring Tree <i>Viburnum lantana</i> | 15' | 3 | Good for dry soils. Black fruit. Other Viburnums also grow well in full sun. |
| Trees for Full Sun | | | |
| Alder, Black <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> | 80' | 3 | Prefers wet soils. Somewhat weak-wooded. Invasive, not recommended in natural areas. |
| Catalpa, Western <i>Catalpa speciosa</i> | 100' | 5 | Large, white flower clusters in early summer followed by long, brown pod. Tolerates hot, dry weather. |
| Cedar, Red <i>Juniperus virginiana</i> | 75' | 3 | Columnar, needled evergreen. Do not plant near Apple, Hawthorn, Crabapples, or Quince. |
| Fir, White <i>Abies concolor</i> | 100' | 4 | Resists heat and drought. Blue-green, needled evergreen. |
| Golden-rain Tree <i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i> | 45' | 5 | Yellow flower clusters in summer followed by brown fruit pods. Weak-wooded. Prune for wide crotch angles. |
| Honey Locust, Thornless <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> var. <i>inermis</i> | 140' | 4 | Large, brown pods on fruiting trees. Open growth habit. |

| Common Name Scientific Name | Height | Zone | Comments |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Japanese Pagoda Tree <i>Sophora japonica</i> | 80' | 5 | Older trees have yellow-white flowers in late summer. Brown pods cling to tree through late fall. Withstands city growing conditions. |
| Maple, Hedge <i>Acer campestre</i> | 35' | 5 | Dense growth. Good for screening. |
| Maple, Norway <i>Acer platanoides</i> | 60-70' | 4 | Small, yellow flowers before leaves. Many forms available. Invasive, not recommended in natural areas. |
| Maple, Red <i>Acer rubrum</i> | 120' | 3 | Red flowers in early spring followed by red seeds. Red fall color. Prune for wide crotch angles. |
| Maple, Silver <i>Acer saccharinum</i> | 90-130' | 3 | Rapidly growing maple with silvery color under leaves. Weak-wooded. Prune for wide crotch angles. |
| Maple, Trident <i>Acer buergerianum</i> | 50' | 6 | Low-growing maple with rounded habit. |
| Oak, Bur <i>Quercus macrocarpa</i> | 80' | 4 | Red fall color. Requires large area for growth. |
| Pine, Austrian <i>Pinus nigra</i> | 100' | 4 | Grows well on limestone soils. Good as specimen or mass plantings. Susceptible to Diplodia Tip Blight. |
| London Plane <i>Platanus xacerifolia</i> | 120' | 5 | Colorful exfoliating bark. Susceptible to anthracnose. |
| Poplar, Bolleana <i>Populus alba</i> 'Bolleana' | 90' | 4 | Silver underside to leaves; interesting gray bark. Requires large area for growth. |
| Rubber-tree, Hardy <i>Eucommia ulmoides</i> | 60' | 5 | Similar to elms in growth habit. |
| Russian Olive <i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i> | 20' | 3 | Gray-green foliage and fragrant flowers. Susceptible to canker. Invasive, not recommended. |
| Spruce, Colorado <i>Picea pungens</i> | 100' | 3 | Blue-green, needled evergreen. May be attacked by spruce gall aphid. |

* Janie Nordstrom Griffiths assisted in the revision of this publication.

For more information on the subject discussed in this publication, consult your local office of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service.