



Department of Horticulture

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service • West Lafayette, IN

Landscape Plants for Moist to Slightly Moist Areas

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

Moist to slightly moist soils never have standing water but usually hold some moisture during the heat of summer. A common example of this moisture condition occurs in woodland areas, where soils are composed of a thin layer of humus which holds moisture. The following lists plants which perform well under these 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.

Special alert: Due to its invasive nature, Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is no longer recommended for Indiana gardens. Please note that it is illegal to buy, sell, or plant Purple loosestrife in Indiana. For further information, please refer to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources page on the subject: <http://www.state.in.us/dnr/entomolo/purple.htm>.

Groundcovers and Vines for Moist to Slightly Moist Soils

Common Name Scientific Name	Height	Zone	Comments
Bee Balm <i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	4'	4-HP	Sun to partial shade. Summer flowers of red or pink.
Bee Balm <i>Monarda didyma</i>	4'	4-HP	Fragrant, scarlet flowers, June to August. Attracts hummingbirds. Shade.
Bleeding-Heart <i>Dicentra spectabilis</i>	2'	4-HP	Requires good drainage. Pink flowers on drooping spikes, May to June. Partial shade
Bleeding-Heart, Wild <i>Dicentra eximia</i>	2'	4-HP	Pink-purple mid-summer flowers last up to six weeks. Partial shade.
Bugleweed, Carpet <i>Ajuga reptans</i>	10"	4	Sun or partial shade. Cultivars available with bronze, purple, or variegated foliage. Sun or shade.
Buttercups <i>Ranunculus</i> spp.	6"-2'	4-HP	Wide selection of variable hardiness. Usually yellow flowered.

Common Name Scientific Name	Height	Zone	Comments
Columbine <i>Aquilegia x hybrida</i>	15"-3'	3-HP	Partial shade. Diverse group, excellent for the perennial or rock garden. Sun to shade.
Coralbells <i>Heuchera sanguinea</i>	2'	4-HP	Light shade to sun. Bell-shaped flowers. Interesting foliage.
Daylily, Orange <i>Hemerocallis fulva</i>	6'	4-HP	Orange-red blooms borne on 6' spikes mid-summer. Sun or partial shade.
Dead Nettle, Spotted <i>Lamium maculatum</i>	18"	4-HP	Though somewhat weedy in shape, this plant has dark green leaves splotched with silver. Small, lavender flowers bloom through summer.
English Ivy <i>Hedera helix</i>	6-8" (ground-cover) 60' (vine)	5-6	Broadleaved evergreen. May climb walls via small root-like appendages.
Forget-me-not <i>Myosotis scorpioides</i>	11/2'	3-HP	Blue woodland flower. Blooms July to August. Shade.
Geranium, Blood Red <i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	11/2'	4-HP	Profuse, purple-red to magenta flowers. May to August. Interesting foliage.
Goutweed <i>Aegopodium podagraria</i> 'Variegatum'	14"	3-HP	Sun or shade. Silver-edged leaves. Spreads rapidly. Contain to prevent from becoming a pest.
Japanese Spurge <i>Pachysandra terminalis</i>	1'	5	Shade. Spreads by stolons (creeping stems). Evergreen.
Periwinkle, Common <i>Vinca minor</i>	6"	4	Sun or shade. Shiny, semi-evergreen foliage. Sparse, blue flowers. Invasive in natural areas.
Plantain Lily <i>Hosta decorata</i>	2'	3-HP	Partial shade. Many cultivars available with variegated foliage. Flowers borne on spikes.
Rose Mallow, Common <i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	8'	4-HP	Shade. Large, attractive flowers.
Spiraea (Japanese Astilbe) <i>Astilbe japonica</i>	3'	4-HP	Attractive flowers June to August. Sun to partial shade.
Trillium (White Wake-Robin) <i>Trillium grandiflorum</i>	11/2'	2-HP	Naturalizes well. Requires rich soil and partial shade. White flowers in spring.
Violet, Woolly Blue <i>Viola soraria</i>	6-8"	2-HP	Partial sun or shade. Dark blue or purple flowers in spring. Self-seeds easily.
Virginia Bluebells <i>Mertensia virginica</i>	2'	4-HP	Flowers in early summer. Partial shade

Common Name Scientific Name	Height	Zone	Comments
Shrubs for Moist to Slightly Moist Soils			
Carolina Allspice (Sweet Shrub) <i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	10'	5	Leaves and stems fragrant when crushed. Reddish brown flowers in mid-May. Sun or partial shade.
Dogwood, Panicked (Gray Dogwood) <i>Cornus racemosa</i>	15'	4	Dense growth. Purplish fall color. Sun or partial shade.
Dogwood, Red Osier <i>Cornus sericea</i>	10'	3	Bright red twigs attractive in winter. Spreads by stolons (creeping stems). Sun or partial shade.
Dogwood, Yellowtwig <i>Cornus sericea</i> 'Flaviramea'	10'	3	Bright yellow twigs. Sun or partial shade.
Elderberry, American <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	8'	4	Sun to partial shade. Edible berries attractive to birds.
Fringetree <i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	30'	5	Late to leaf out in spring. White flowers in early June.
Fothergilla, Large <i>Fothergilla major</i>	10'	5	Yellow to scarlet fall color. Early spring bloom.
Hydrangea, Climbing <i>Hydrangea anomala</i> var. <i>petiolaris</i>	75'	5	Clinging vine. Late spring bloom. Full sun.
Mountain-laurel <i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	10'	5	Broadleaved evergreen. Requires acid soil. Pink, white, or red spring blooms. Protect from winter sun and wind.
Nannyberry <i>Viburnum lentago</i>	30'	3	Sun. White spring blooms. Colorful, blue-red berries in late summer. Purple-red fall color.
Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	40'	5	Partial shade. Purplish blooms before leaves appear in spring. Protect from winds.
Rose-of-Sharon <i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>	6-10'	6	Sun. Late summer bloom. Protect in winter the first two years after planting.
Silver-bell <i>Halesia carolina</i>	40'	5	White flower clusters in early spring.
Summersweet <i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	10'	5	Fragrant, mid-summer flowers. Attractive fall foliage.
Willow, Goat <i>Salix caprea</i>	25'	5	Attractive early spring catkins (Pussywillow). Can be cut to the ground to encourage shrub formation.

Common Name Scientific Name	Height	Zone	Comments
Trees for Moist to Slightly Moist Soils			
Birch, River <i>Betula nigra</i>	100'	4	Interesting reddish, peeling bark. Usually not attacked by Bronze Birch Borer.
Cypress, Bald <i>Taxodium distichum</i> var. <i>distichum</i>	150'	5	Soft needles drop in fall. Interesting bark.
Hemlock, Canada <i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	80'	3	Needled evergreen with gracefully drooping branches. Sun or partial shade.
Hickory, Shagbark <i>Carya ovata</i>	120'	5	Difficult to transplant. Plant as young tree or seedling.
Katsura Tree <i>Cercidiphyllum japonicum</i>	100'	5	Blue-green summer foliage; bright yellow to scarlet fall colors.
Larch, European <i>Larix decidua</i>	105'	3	Deciduous needles give fine texture.
London Plane <i>Platanus xacerifolia</i>	120'	5	Colorful, exfoliating bark. Susceptible to anthracnose.
Maple, Japanese <i>Acer palmatum</i>	20'	5	Protect from heat and winds. Many cultivars available.
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.
Oak, Bur <i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	80'	4	Red color. Requires large areas for growth.
Oak, Pin <i>Quercuspalustris</i>	80'	5	Brilliant fall color. Requires loose, slightly acid soil.
Redwood, Dawn <i>Metasequoia glyptostroboides</i>	100'	5	Fast-growing pyramidal tree. Needle-like leaves drop in fall. Requires large area for growth.
Sour Gum <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	100'	5-6	Outstanding fall color. May be difficult to transplant.
Spruce, Colorado <i>Picea pungens</i>	100'	3	Blue-green needled evergreen.
Spruce, Serbian <i>Picea omorika</i>	100'	4	Narrow growth habit. Pendulous branches.
Sweet Gum <i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	120'	5-6	Star-shaped leaves have outstanding orange-scarlet fall color. May be difficult to transplant.
Willow, Goat <i>Salix caprea</i>	25'	5	Attractive early spring catkins (Pussy Willow). Can be cut to the ground to encourage shrub formation.

* 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.

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