

Treat Yourself to a Shady Escape

When it comes to the sun, it's definitely possible to get too much of a good thing. Without enough shade in your yard, the amount of time you get to spend enjoying your outdoor living space is going to be limited.

OPTIONS FOR CREATING SHADY AREAS

One obvious way to bring shade to your yard is to plant trees, such as oaks and maples, which will provide ample shade once they've had a chance to grow. Of course, that's not going to take care of your problem right away.



This vine-covered pergola provides a shady retreat from direct sun.

If you're looking for a quick fix, a table/umbrella combination or an awning can be added to your existing patio or deck. Or, you might even consider installing a permanent wooden gazebo if you have the available space in your yard.

For a more natural-looking shade source that blends in better with your landscape, a vine-covered trellis or pergola makes an excellent choice. Installed over a patio or seating area, this wooden latticework structure will provide beautiful shade and shelter once the vines get established.

The great thing about vines is that they can flourish in very narrow spaces. Plus, they can grow in only half a season, rather than the many years it takes for a tree to reach full size. There are plenty of vines to choose from. It's simply a matter of matching the plant to your needs, tastes and growing conditions. Morning glory, grapes, hardy kiwi, rose, clematis and wisteria are all good to work with.

No matter what type of shade source you choose, you'll be enhancing the looks, functionality and value of your landscape. It's definitely an investment worth making!

Give Hummingbirds a Reason to Drop By

Did you know that hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly both forwards and backwards? They can also hover in midair, fly sideways and even fly upside down. If you've ever seen one of these birds up close, you know how mesmerizing they can be.

It's always a treat when a hummingbird shows up on your property. You can increase the chances of a visit by including hummingbird-friendly plants in your landscape. Hummingbirds are known to feed on the following:

SHRUBS

- Butterfly bush
- Trumpet vine
- Summer sweet

PERENNIALS

- Bleeding heart
- Butterfly weed
- Beard tongue
- Daylily
- Bee balm
- Cardinal flower
- Coral bells
- Delphinium

ANNUALS

- Impatiens
- Nasturtium
- Salvia
- Spider flower
- Snapdragon
- Morning glory
- Petunia
- Flowering tobacco



Hummingbirds will liven up any garden with their acrobatics.

Hummingbird feeders help too, and you can easily find them at your local garden store. Feeders work best if they're hung in a quiet spot away from noise and traffic (ideally close to a window so you can watch from inside and avoid disturbing the hummingbirds as they feed). Good luck!