

CULTIVATE DESIGN KC

SUN VS. SHADE

WHERE TO PUT YOUR PLANTS, IN 3 STEPS



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STEP 1 Track the Sun

Take a look at your garden, deck or porch. Decide on a location where you want to add some plants. Now let's go Old School, as in Ancient Old School and track the sun's movement through your outdoor space. Mark in your calendar; 1 day to track the sun every 2-3 hours from dawn to dusk. Each time you go out to track where the sun is, write down the time, how much sun, is it direct light, filtered light or shade. Take pictures to refer back to. This will give you a clear visual of what you are working with. Keep in mind the amount of sun will also shift some from Spring to Fall.

Full Sun= 6-8 hours of direct sun light

Partial Sun/Shade = 3-6 hours of direct sun light (all plants can handle some sun or shade). Most plants that flourish in partial sun prefer morning sun and shade in afternoon heat.

Full Shade = either less then 3 hours of direct sunlight or no direct sunlight, only filtered sun.

Step 2 Hardiness Zones

In addition to sun vs. shade we need to also look at temperature and hardiness zones.

The US Department of Agriculture has an estimated map applied to geographical areas across the states that indicate the climate and conditions of a given area. The hardiness zones inform us where plants will survive based on the climate. For example, plants should have a care tag that state which hardiness zones they will survive in. This means, they will survive through the Winter in the zones it is marked for. If there is no care tag, then research or Google it before making the purchase. If you are in Zone 6 and the plant will survive in Zone 4-5, then you may only get to enjoy it for a short time, not year round.

<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>

STEP 3 Native Origin

Believe it or not, many plants, trees and bushes that grow in the United States did not come from here. Such as the poinsettia, it is a wild bush in South America but is grown in Green Houses here for Christmas. It is helpful to research



the native origin of a plant species. This gives us more clues to its preferred climate, helping us to better determine how much sun or shade is needed. If it needs to be protected from the wind, the amounts of water it requires, etc.

BONUS STEP Plan a Field Trip

Mark on your Calendar a day to take a field trip to your local Arboretum or Botanical Garden.

Here you can explore plants in their best settings for sun vs. shade and temperature. Take pictures of areas that spark your interest or may do well in your garden and climate.

ACTION STEPS

- Track the Sun in the location you wish to put your plants.
- Determine which Hardiness Zone you Live in
- Research the Native Origin of the plants
- Take a field trip to local Arboretum or Botanical Garden
- Learning more about the sun light you have to work with, the native origin and climate the plants thrive in, will give you the knowledge you need to save money and time in the garden and help your plants flourish.

Happy Planting,
Lori Neely

