

SHADE TOLERANT SPECIES GENUINELY SHINE

By Tony Tomeo

UNITED STATES—Home gardens are getting shadier as bigger modern homes occupy smaller modern lots. Bigger homes make bigger shadows. So do their bigger fences that compensate for their minimal proximity to each other. Less space within their smaller gardens extends beyond their shade. Consequently, shade tolerant species have become more popular than ever.

Also, small trees have become more popular than large trees for small modern gardens. However, more of them are evergreen to partially obscure obtrusively close homes. Their shade lasts throughout the year, and is likely darker than that of deciduous trees. It could be too dark in some situations even for shade tolerant species. Even they need sunlight.

Realistically, shade tolerant species merely require a bit less sunlight than most species. No real vegetation can survive without any sunlight. Like it or not, artificial turf can be the most practical option for the shadiest of lawns. Some potted plants can cycle around the garden, to take turns in shade and sunlight. If so, they may not need to be shade tolerant.

Shade is as natural as sunshine.

Most shade tolerant species perform differently with shade than with better exposure. For example, some rhododendrons that tolerate shade bloom better with more sunlight. Most species with colorful



Andromeda can be somewhat shade tolerant.

or variegated foliage are more colorful with more sunlight. Likewise, sunlight enhances autumn color for some deciduous species. Shade is merely tolerable.

Also, some shade may be dynamic. Garden space below deciduous trees can be shady for summer, but sunny for winter. Below high evergreen trees, sunlight might get through at a lower angle through winter. Major pruning or removal of veg-

etation can improve sun exposure if necessary. Many shade tolerant species are adaptable to such modifications.

Most shade tolerant species are understory species. They naturally live below canopies of higher vegetation. Some have big leaves and dark foliar color to maximize absorption of sunlight. Ferns are famously tolerant of shade, although tree ferns can reach above it. Kaffir lily, cast

iron plant and hosta tolerate shade also. Rhododendron, azalea, camellia, andromeda and hydrangea tolerate shade as well, but need a bit of sunlight to bloom.

Highlight: Andromeda

Andromeda might be more familiar by its Latin name of Pieris. A few of its seven species, and a few of their hybrids, are popular for home gardens. All are evergreen shrubs. A few do not grow much taller and wider than three feet. A few can grow a bit more than 10 feet tall and wide. In the wild, some might grow as small trees that are almost 20 feet tall.

Andromeda has glossy evergreen foliage. Individual leaves are lanceolate, perhaps with serrated margins. They are between one and three inches long, and half to an inch wide. New growth of most cultivars is as rich cinnamon red as that of photinia. A few cultivars have more pinkish or simple green new growth. A few cultivars are variegated with white.

Andromeda blooms with somewhat pendulous racemes of tiny pendulous flowers. Floral racemes are between two and four inches long. Individual flowers are between a quarter and half an inch long. Most are white. Some are pink. Most have green rachis. Some have pink rachis. Bloom is abundant for the middle of spring. Andromeda prefers partial shade.

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THE SOLAR ECLIPSE EVENT

By Davy Jones

UNITED STATES—The event that the globe was talking about happened on Monday, April 8. I'm referring to the Total Solar Eclipse that was visible for so many cities throughout the United States. I have never seen Americans so happy about space and astronomy. It was like an event unlike anything ever seen in this country. A Total Solar Eclipse it is something that doesn't happen often, especially to a degree where it crosses multiple states in the USA.

Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Vermont and so much more. People were traveling across the country to get the opportunity to see this moment in the sky. It started at around 1:58 p.m. EST in Mexico and then it started to move across the country. If you were lucky enough to see some of the live streams across the country and you were NOT in the path of totality it was amazing.

I mean there were parts of the country where it was light one minute and then it went dark. Then guess what, the sunlight came back. I was visibly speechless watching this because you have never seen such a thing; at least I haven't in my lifetime. Yes, the sun was visibly bright in my



The Total Solar Eclipse was something worth seeing. Photo by Jong-sun Lee via Unsplash.

location and while NOT in the path of totality I was damn close.

Kids, kids, kids, were excited about this event. Adults were excited about this event. Parents were pulling their kids out of school so they could spend the day with their kids to witness something iconic and share a moment. I saw neighbors I have not seen for months. People were actually on their lawn with their solar eclipse glasses looking at the sun. Yes, people were smart and had the correct glasses that were pretty much available at any reputable es-

tablishment.

I was able to purchase several pairs of glasses at Lowes to ensure my family was safe and protected because the sunlight was pretty bright on April 8. Now, let's talk about what I witnessed. The sun was bright, and then it started to slowly get dark, it almost felt like it was about to storm, but it wasn't. To see the moon cross Earth's path right in front of the sun was awesome.

The temperature changed outside. It got a bit windy and then chilly for a moment

and it was near 70 degrees where I was. Then the eclipse takes place, and it gets darker America. It was like witnessing something I have never seen before in my life. My region didn't get pitch black, but it was darker than normal, and it was NOT a storm or extreme cloudiness occurring. It was the moon crossing Earth and the Sun at the perfect time creating a near blackout or shadow in some instances. For several minutes, I experienced something I have NEVER seen in my life before and I will likely not see ever again and to be in that moment was just awesome.

It really made me want to study space, the galaxy, the sun, the planets and so much more that is out there that we know nothing about. The world is this vast extravaganza of knowledge that not many people explore to its fullest potential. I don't like to touch complicated subject matters at times because it fries my brain, but the realization has hit me; if something frustrates you it's because you're interested in it. The next Total Solar Eclipse that crosses minor parts of the U.S. is in 2044, then for more parts of the U.S. that is in 2099. Yeah, not many of us will be around in 2099, so hopefully you could enjoy the 2024 event if possible.