



Rethinking Foundation Plantings

Planting in Boxwood (*Buxus*) is another front of your option for a shaded foundation. A pleasing foundation planting house is They are best planted where they could be designed using just a easy, right? Plant 3 to 5 ever- will be sheltered from winter variety of evergreens, but why greens of the same kind in a row winds. Green Velvet is a 2 to 4 ' not consider other plants to to hide the concrete foundation. mound of dark green, shiny create a planting that changes Your only decision is whether to evergreen leaves. Or choose with the seasons. prune them in the shape of a Glencoe. The Chicago Botanic Garden selected this cultivar for **Deciduous Shrubs** naturally and then cut a shelf its excellent cold hardiness. It Don 't overlook deciduous across the top. grows 3 to 4 ' tall and 5 ' wide. shrubs. Many offer flowers, fall color, or both.

Foundation planting can be so If the front of your house basks in much better! Plants should softly the sun, globe arborvitae are a Small hydrangeas are a welcome ' hug ' the house, not over- better choice. Little Giant grows addition if you can give them power it. They should welcome 4 ' tall and wide. Its rich green protection from hot afternoon visitors and act as a transition lacelike foliage rarely needs sun. The Endless Summer family zone from outside to inside. They pruning. offers many fine choices. Endless should be pretty and interesting. Summer, the hydrangea that

Evergreen Shrubs

Evergreens play an important evergreen shrub. Young foliage is or more beginning in mid part in foundation plantings. They rich blue. It grows 3 ' tall and up summer. The flowers will be blue offer substance year round and to 4 ' wide. if you add soil sulphur to make your soil more acidic, or do like I may be the only green to be seen do and enjoy the soft pink in winter. Shrub euonymus (*Euonymus fortunei*) can be planted in either blooms. It 's the perfect size for

I have one yew (*Taxus x media*) included in my Blondy is a compact selection – tall and wide. foundation planting. Its dark only 2 ' tall and wide - with ever-

green needles play a supporting green yellow leaves edged in Similar in size, Twist-n-Shout role spring, summer and fall, but dark green. In winter, yellow also produces lots of blooms all in winter it provides welcome stems turn reddish and foliage is summer long. Pink or blue petals color between my window boxes. tinged with pink and purple. (depending on your soil) surround deep pink centers. Its

Yews perform in shady and partly Emerald Gaiety is another deep green leaves turn reddish shady sites. The variety, Tautonii, variegated variety. Its bright burgundy in the fall. Blushing grows 3 to 4 ' feet tall and about green leaves have white margins Bride offers pure white flowers 5 ' wide. that blush pink in winter. that blush pink as they mature.

Dwarf Fothergilla is another good choice for a spot in full sun or part shade. White, bottlebrush honey-scented flowers appear in spring and fall color is a fiery mix of yellow, orange and red. It prefers acidic soil, but tolerates our northern Illinois soils.

Blue Mist has pretty blue foliage, but the fall color is less intense. It grows 2 to 3' tall. Mt. Airy is a larger selection – at least 4' tall, has bluish-green leaves, but incredible color in fall.

Give Virginia Sweetspire (*Itea 'Henry's Garnet'*) full sun to part shade, and it will give you large white flower spikes that attract butterflies in early summer and spectacular scarlet foliage in fall. It grows 3 to 4' tall.

Spirea 'Tor' grows 2 to 3' tall in a dense, compact mound in full sun. Clusters of white flowers cover the foliage in late spring. Dark blue-green leaves, lovely all summer long, change to orange, red and purple in fall.

Perennials

Large perennials are also possible candidates for a foundation planting.

Hostas offer large, colorful leaves to a shady location. Regal Splendor and Blue Angel have a home in my foundation planting. Regal Splendor is a large, vase-shaped hosta with soft blue leaves margined in creamy yellow. Mine is 30" tall and about 4' wide. Blue Angel is a mound of huge blue, corrugated leaves. It tops out just less than 3' tall and is almost 5' wide.

Ornamental Grasses

Ornamental grasses provide texture year round. If my foundation planting were in full sun, I'd choose Karl Foerster feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis acutiflora*). It has a wonderful upright growth habit – a perfect contrast to rounded shrubs. Its feathery plumes emerge earlier than other grasses and ripen to wheat colored seed heads in fall.

Hameln dwarf fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*) is compact and fine-textured. It grows 2' tall and wide. Buff colored seed heads pop up in late summer.

National Arboretum fountain grass is an arching mound of soft, bright green leaf blades. Unique, near black seed heads appear just above the foliage in late summer.

Mix and match evergreen and deciduous shrubs, large perennials, and ornamental grasses and create a beautiful and interesting foundation planting. All that's left to do is to plant some bulbs for early spring color!