

# in the garden Spring!

By Karen Marks, Resident Writer

**The time for the garden to awaken, and all those garden chores... Once the leaves are bagged, the beds edged and the mulch placed, it is time to plant, hooray!**

Today I would like to touch on some basic advice for you to garden by. There are just too many things that people overlook when putting those new green pieces of life into the ground, and these very things could be cause for demise. Losing plants is heartbreaking for many reasons: expense, labor expended, and of course the thought that you will never find that exact specimen again!

Without getting into the science of photosynthesis, I would like to discuss what each and every tree, shrub, perennial, groundcover or even weed, for that matter, needs to survive and flourish.

**Sunlight** - They all need light, but each and every plant has its own preferences. First, we have full sun, which means 6 full hours of pure unadulterated sunlight beating down on that plant. No tree or other obstacles can block out the sun in that time period.

**Part-sun** comes next, with a requirement of 3-6 hours of unlimited exposure to that golden ball in the sky. After that, part shade, which has just one bit of difference from part-sun.

The part shade plant prefers 3-6 hours of early morning or late day sun, and not the stronger rays of midday.

Lastly, full shade, where fewer plants survive, at less than 3 hours of sunshine per day. That is where hostas are in their glory. What would we do without them?

**Water** - More preferences are obvious in the water category. You must be aware of the water requirements of all those green beauties basking in the sun, or bam, the kiss of death! Therefore, a plan should be in place to group your leafy friends by their water needs. We all know what a hydrangea looks like at the end of a hot day.

**Proper Soil** - And by that, I mean not just dirt! Soil should have proper drainage, and nutrients that are the food that provides our green buddies with the capabilities to grow, and flower and set seed. The nutrients are nitrogen-which gives our plants a nice rich green color, potassium-a powerhouse that builds strong roots and fights off diseases, and phosphorus-for flower power and strength to cope with stressful conditions.

So there you have it. I've given you the boring basics. The worst is over. But, before you head out to the nursery, intoxicated by Spring



Examples of Karen's garden design: part shade in Huntington Bay



Part sun in Huntington Bay



Full sun on Wincoma Beach

Fever, do your research. Understand the specific conditions that exist in your garden, and choose the plants that will thrive there. And whatever you do, don't forget to water!



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