

Border Recipe: Shady Exotic

To create a vibrant exotic border under the deep, summer shade of a couple of Beech trees requires extra thought and consideration because many exotics prefer warmth and brightness to thrive. I chose a backdrop of reliable, shade-loving shrubs that had an exotic quality to them to provide a shelter belt. Then I planted up the remaining area (about 1.2m deep and 5m wide) that had some afternoon sun with a combination of grasses and herbaceous perennials. Some tender annuals (about 10% of the total) were added for temporary highlights.



This border was retained by a sleeper wall which ensured that the soil depth was generous. At the front of the bed, the soil was good; towards the back, along the line of the Beech trees, very thin and chalky and had to be improved. The bed was heavily mulched after planting. This photograph was taken on 4th September; the picture below shortly after planting at the end of May.



Plant List

The Back Row – providing a shelter belt effect to protect tender exotics from easterly and northerly winds:

Aucuba japonica 'variegata' (spotted laurel)	Pittosporum tenuissima 'Silver Queen'
Kerria japonica 'Picta'	Hydrangea quercifolia
Jasminum humile 'Revolutum'	Choisya ternata
X Fatsyhedera lizei 'Annemieke'	Ricinus communis – treated as an annual

The Herbaceous Perennials and Grasses:

Arum italicum	
Hakonechloa macra aureum – excellent grass for shade, vibrant lime-green leaves	
Acanthus mollis	Sisyrinchium striatum
Liriope muscari	Impatiens sp.
Anemone nemerosa	Tagetes
Persicaria amplexicaulis 'Firetail'	Gazania
Canna indica	Hosta sp.
Heuchera 'Persian Carpet'	Asiatic lilies
Arisaema sp.	



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