‘Top’ Shade Perennial Flowering Plants
From Pat Curran
CCE Tompkins County

Relatively long-lived and drought-resistant, don’t need frequent division, disease/pest resistant, staking not essential, winter-hardy, not fussy about soil if well-drained, don’t spread too much, preferably bloom for several weeks, good foliage quality.

- Alchemilla mollis, lady’s mantle               deer-resistant; foliage and flowers
- Anemone ‘Honorine Jobert’, ‘September Charm’ not invasive like some varieties
- Astilbe species and varieties, ‘Fanal’      deer-resistant but drought-sensitive
- Brunnera macrophylla ‘Jack Frost,’ ‘Looking Glass’  deer-resistant hosta substitute
- Cimicifuga (now Actaea) racemosa, black snakeroot native; vertical accent
- Corydalis lutea, ochroleuca              leave seedlings in place
- Dicentra eximia, fringed bleeding heart    long-blooming; may spread
- Dicentra spectabilis, old-fashioned bleeding heart showy; goes dormant in August
- Epimedium species, barrenwort            small scale groundcover; dry shade OK
- Geranium macrorrhizum, bigroot geranium   excellent for dry shade
- Helleborus x hybridus, Lenten rose         deer-resistant early bloomer
- Heuchera ‘Green Spice’, ‘Amethyst Mist’    watch out for frost-heaving
- Hosta ‘Krossa Regal’                      arching habit; slug-resistant variety
- Polygonatum commutatum, great Solomon’s seal deer problem, native
- Pulmonaria ‘Trevi Fountain’, lungwort       showy early bloomer; mildew-resistant

Reference:
Herbaceous Perennial Plants, Third Edition, by Allan M. Armitage
Perennials for American Gardens by Ruth Rogers Clausen and Nicolas H. Ekstrom
The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting & Pruning Techniques, by Tracy DiSabato-Aust

Learn more:
Cornell Bluegrass Lane perennial research:
http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/ornamentals/cornell_herbaceous/
Missouri Botanic Garden Plant Finder (over 6800 plants):
http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfinder/plantfindersearch.aspx
Garden Guidance
www.gardening.cornell.edu

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