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# A Woodland In Bloom

If anyone ever says they can't have flowers because they have too much shade, show them these pictures. Atlantan Bill Smith gardens under tiered canopies of dogwood, black gum, ash, and pine trees. The result is a garden brimming with color from wildflowers and shade-loving perennials, all carefully orchestrated to bloom in drifts of blue, white, and yellow.

"I'm particular about color—whether it's in my sunny perennial bed or my woodland garden," Bill explains. "Since I haven't been able to fulfill my dream of creating a



*Siebold plantain lily*  
(*Hosta sieboldiana*  
*Elegans*)



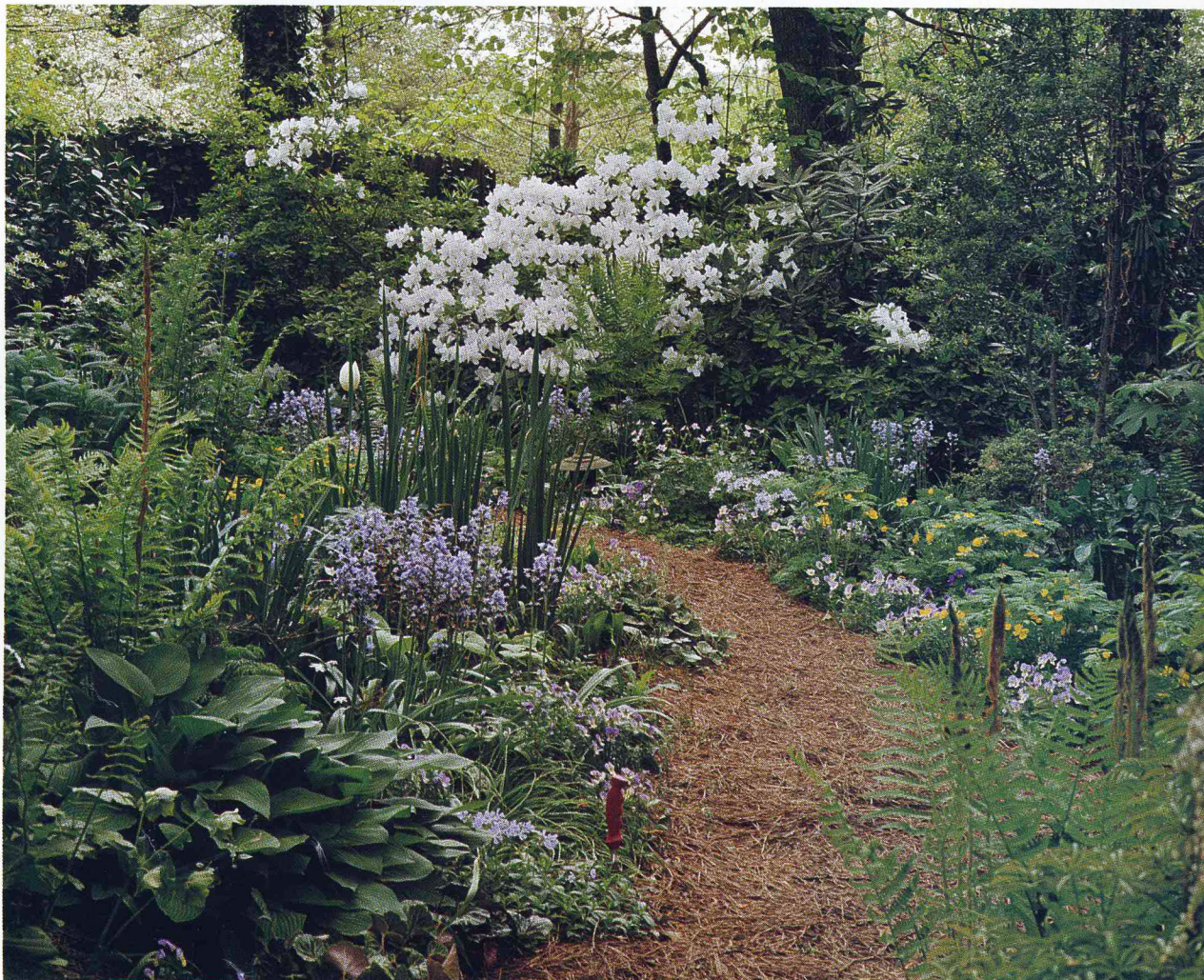
*Spanish bluebells*  
(*Endymion*  
*hispanicus*)



*Cinnamon fern*  
(*Osmunda*  
*cinnamomea*)

completely blue border, I decided the next best thing would be to incorporate blue in as much of my garden as I could. Anything else winds up being white or yellow to make the blue sparkle."

One of the greatest challenges of gardening under trees is the competition from their roots for water and nutrients. "I dug *around* the roots because I didn't want to disturb them," he explains. (To page 124)



*This border is the essence of spring—colorful and airy in drifts of blue and white with accents of yellow.*



(Above) *Lenten rose*  
(*Helleborus orientalis*)

"Where I could dig, I dug as deeply as possible. When I hit compacted tree roots, the soil became shallow—just as it would in the forest. Then I tried to grow what that area would accommodate."

Two plants that Bill finds especially tolerant of tree roots are epimedium and sensitive fern.

"You can tell a lot about the character of a plant after you watch it for a while," he says. "After you experience its limitations, you can make the decision where that plant can grow," he says.

A stroll down the pine needle

#### BILL'S BLUES

Blue phlox (*Phlox divaricata*)

Spanish bluebells (*Endymion hispanicus*)

Sorbet violas (*Viola hybrida*)

Ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*)

Blue selaginella (*Selaginella uncinata*)

Lungwort (*Pulmonaria saccharata* Mrs. Moon)

Siebold plantain lily (*Hosta sieboldiana* Elegans)

I wouldn't call a garden.

"You have to study what the plants do, watch when they bloom, see how they relate to each other, and then you start adjusting them.

"I know that a lot of people like to use combinations in groups of

three, but I wanted more than that. I wanted that whole walkway to be just buzzing, not a grouping here and there. I wanted to be able to see it from afar."

Congratulations, Bill. You got your wish. *Linda C. Askey*

path that traverses Bill's garden reveals an astonishing variety of plants whose limitations and potential he seems to know well. "This really has become a collection of wildflowers," he says, "but I've seen some plant collections that



*G. G. Gerbing Indian azalea*  
(*Azalea indica* G. G. Gerbing)



*Chinese ground orchid*  
(*Bletilla striata*)



*Celandine poppy*  
(*Chelidonium majus*)