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Contributed by Kim Eckert

## HELLEBORES



For most shade gardens, Hellebores are a major component of the design. They offer interest at least nine months out of the year and thrive in mostly shady areas where few plants can. Once established, they can hold their own amongst tree roots and act as a lush groundcover with long-lasting blooms and distinct leaves.

Few perennials have the staying power of Hellebores. One of the first flowers to appear in the late winter, the blooms last for two months. As they mature, the flowers morph into seed heads and remain beautiful for months. Even as the flower heads fade, new leaves form to create a lush look through the summer and into fall.



In the past, the flowers were typically a shade of dusty pink to dark purple and faced downwards, not exactly a gardener's dream. Through years of hybridization, the flowers available now range from bright whites to the darkest of purples, almost black. In between, there are gorgeous pinks, reds, greens and mixed blooms to enjoy. In addition, several of the flowers face upwards towards the sky and come in double petal combinations.

If you have a shady spot and love long-lasting blooms that will provide enjoyment from February until June and interest through November, try a few Hellebores. Perhaps my favorite flower will become yours.



*Happy New Year from the TCGC Horticulture Committee.  
Wishing You Peace, Happiness and Good Health in 2022!*

