

NO SUN FOR YOU!!

Do you sometimes think you are on the Seinfeld show with the “Soup Nazi” when you walk out into your yard under all the trees, and you hear “No sun for you”! Here are a few tips to get you out of the soup line.

First thing to do is to shear up those large tree branches that are hanging low and preventing the sun’s rays or even ambient light from penetrating to the ground. Thinning out any dead branches, those in contention with each other, or horizontal reaching ones will allow more sunlight under the tree. Prune off all low branches on the trunk that do not permit you to walk or mow comfortably without a branch and leaf lashing. Pruning is best done in late winter, but keeping low branches removed can be done throughout the spring and early summer.

Maybe the trees shading your turf are in the adjacent property and cutting the tree down at night is not feasible. Perhaps you should consider planting something besides grass to stay out of jail. There are several great ground covers that will spread readily and can be planted on a 12 to 14-inch square. Lamium, sometimes called deadnettle, is a blooming variety that does well in shade. Blooms vary in color from yellow to pink to purple, depending on the cultivar. The variegation in the leaves really shows up well in the shade.

Euonymus fortunei “Coloratus”, or Purpleleaf Wintercreeper, is a tri-colored ground cover that shows off its colors in the foliage, instead of flower blooms, displaying maroon, green and purple on the leaves.

There are a wide variety of Mondo grasses, also called Lilyturf or Monkey grass, that form clumps, in colors ranging from green to yellow to white and even black, and some with variegated leaves. The size can range from 10 inches to a super dwarf grass of only 5 cm or 1.97 inches! Easy care and can be used in sun or partial sun as a “no mow” lawn.

The more traditional ground covers used are *Hedera helix*, common ivy, and English Ivy, which comes in leaf shades of green, variegated white and green and variegated green and yellow. All grow well in shade but might tend to climb your tree trunks.

Using ground covers in shady areas of your landscape can be extremely attractive, prevent weeds, are easy to care for and definitely more attractive than bare soil. All you need to add is a few pavers or stepping stones and Voila . . . freedom from the “Soup Nazi”!

KW