

USING GROUND COVERS IN YOUR GARDEN

THE BENEFITS OF GROUNDCOVERS

Depending upon your garden's needs the right ground cover can add seasonal interest, prevent erosion, and/or reduce the time you spend maintaining your garden.

BEFORE YOU CHOOSE... THINGS TO CONSIDER

Getting started--choosing the right plant for the right spot. Before you begin, ask yourself the following questions about the area you are planting:

Sun or shade? How much sun will the plant get and at what time of the day? Consider what your site is like in the middle of the summer. This is the most stressful time of the year for plants due to lack of water and high heat. For example, a shade loving plant will not do well in an area that gets the summer sun from 2pm to 5pm (the hottest time of the day). Better to have a plant in that spot that will thrive in those light and heat conditions.

Is there foot traffic? Plants vary in the amount of foot traffic that they can tolerate. Correctly identifying the amount of foot traffic is critical for the health of the plant.

How large is the area that you want covered? And how quickly do you want it to fill in? This will help you to determine how many plants you will need and the appropriate growth rate and ultimate coverage. (See planting chart)

And, finally, does the area tend to be overly moist or dry? Some plants can tolerate or prefer drought like conditions, while others need moist soil. Being aware of what your plant needs will mean greater success—and more enjoyment—for you as a gardener.

Now that you have an idea about the growing conditions of your site, you can begin your plant search. Below is a list to help you get started (it is by no means all inclusive). Have fun!

PLANT LIST

Ajuga species *Bugleweed*
Moderate sun to shade, relatively fast grower, and semi-evergreen. Moderate foot traffic. Color of foliage ranges from burgundy to variegation with variety.

Alchemilla mollis *Lady's Mantle*
Prefers moist, rich soil, deciduous. Pleated gray-green foliage with chartreuse flowers.
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi *Kinnikinnick*
Evergreen. Tolerates full sun to afternoon shade. Requires little water and care once established. Pinkish-white urn-shaped flowers.

Asarum caudatum *Wild Ginger*
Prefers moist, humus rich soil. Heart-shaped leaves.

Cornus Canadensis *Bunchberry*
Native to NW. Prefers moist, acidic soil, slow growing and spreading, white flowers.
Cotula sp. *New Zealand Brass Buttons*
Evergreen. Can tolerate sun, moderate foot traffic, tight growing ground cover.

Cymbalaria muralis *Kenilworth Ivy*
Prefers moist, rich soil, semi-evergreen. Dainty creeper.

Epimedium sp.

Semi-evergreen to evergreen. Tolerates dry conditions but best with moderate water. Low maintenance. Flowers in spring.

Galium odoratum *Sweet Woodruff*
Prefers rich, moist soil, dense mats of green foliage, fragrant, white flowers.

Gaultheria procumbens *Wintergreen*
Evergreen. Slow growing. Glossy, oval leaves. White flowers followed by scarlet berries.

Gaultheria shallon *Salal*

Evergreen. Native to Pacific NW. Tolerates sun, moist. Prefers acidic soil, excellent for covering large areas. Edible fruit.

Hedera sp. *Ivy*

Evergreen. Tolerates wide range of growing conditions. Good for erosion control, can take moderate foot traffic.

Lamium sp.

Tolerates sun, average to moist soil, green leaves speckled with silver, yellow flowers.

Lysimachia nummularia 'Aurea' *Golden Creeping Jenny*

Prefers rich, moist soil, low and fast growing, moderate foot traffic, bright yellow flowers.

Mentha requienii *Corsican Mint*

Prefers moist, rich soil. Mint fragrance, forms tight green carpet, can take light foot traffic.

Myosotis sylvatica varieties

Prefers average to moist well-drained soil. Self sows, blue, white or rose flowers, grows easily and thickly.

Oxalis oregana

Native to Oregon, prefers frequent watering, flowers in spring, sometimes again in fall, green, clover like leaves.

Pachysandra terminalis *Japanese Spurge*
Evergreen. Prefers moist, acidic soil, will cover an area rapidly. Dark, glossy foliage, blooms in spring, excellent under trees.

Phlox stolonifera *Creeping Phlox*
Evergreen. Prefers rich, well drained, moist soils, slowly forms dense cover, blooms May-June. Needs some direct sun.

Saxifraga stolonifera
Evergreen. Prefers well drained, moist soil. Can take soil on the dryer side more than other species. Forms dense mat of glossy green foliage with scalloped edges. Flowers May-June.

Sedum makinoi 'Ogon'
Evergreen. Prefers dry, well drained soil. Golden foliage.

Soleirolia soleirolii *Baby's Tears*
Prefers rich, moist, well drained soil. Vigorous, carpeting plant with tiny round leaves, can take moderate foot traffic.

Veronica repens 'Sunshine'
Semi-evergreen. Small, brilliant gold foliage, pale purple flowers. Part shade.

Vinca species
Evergreen. Rapidly spreading, excellent for erosion control. Foliage and flowers vary.

Viola species
Prefers moist, well-drained, humus-rich soil. Foliage and flowers vary between species.

****PLEASE NOTE**** The amount of planting space you allow depends on a couple of factors—such as rate of plant growth, mature spread of plant, and how quickly you want a space to fill in.

PLANTING YOUR GROUNDCOVERS

Preparing the Ground

Before planting remove all existing turf grass, weeds and debris. After this is done amend poor soils with compost at a ratio of 1/3 compost to 2/3 soil.

Planting Ground Covers

When planting, be sure that the soil level of the plant is even with that of your planting area. If the plant is too deep, the crown and stems can rot due to the lack of oxygen. And, if planted too shallowly, the plant will not have enough soil contact for adequate rooting or for proper water absorption. Water the plant in thoroughly. It is especially important that new plants get adequate water in the first two summers while they establish themselves. Plants will do fine when fed once in early spring with a balanced fertilizer.

Spacing Chart

To calculate the number of plants needed, use the chart below. Use plant spacing info gathered from resources and find nearest match in first column. Then multiply your area's square footage by the corresponding figure in the right column. The result will be the approximate number of plants to fill your area within one and a half growing seasons.

| Space between plant | Multiply sq. foot. by |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 9" | 1.8 |
| 12" | 1.0 |
| 15" | .64 |
| 18" | .44 |
| 24" | .25 |
| 30" | .16 |
| 36" | .11 |

Ground Covers

Plants for shade



PORTLAND
NURSERY