

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

Acaena microphylla *New Zealand Bur*
Semi-evergreen. Tolerates light foot traffic. Round, serrated leaves. Slow grower, needs ample water. Sun/part shade.

Ajuga reptans *Bugleweed*
Semi-evergreen. Moderate foot traffic. Sun to shade, relatively fast grower. Color of foliage ranges from burgundy to variegation depending on variety. Late spring bloom.

Anthemis mollis *Roman Chamomile*
Evergreen. Tolerates light foot traffic. Forms soft textured mat. Light green, aromatic foliage with small yellow button flowers. Summer bloom.

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi *Kinnikinnick*
Evergreen. Tolerates full sun to afternoon shade, requires little water and care once established.

Bellis nitidum *Miniature Daisy*
Tolerates light foot traffic. Tiny daisy like flowers on wiry stem. Flowers cover small green mat in early spring, free flowering until first frost. Foliage dies back, but readily reseeds itself.

Ceanothus gloriosus *Point Reyes*
Evergreen plant that can spread to 5 feet. Leaves are leathery, dark green with serrated edges and clusters of violet-blue flowers. Late spring bloom. Drought-tolerant.

Ceratostigma plumbaginoides
Dwarf Plumbago

Semi-evergreen. Spreads rapidly by underground stems. Bronze/green foliage in spring, bronze/red in fall. Deep blue flowers bloom in summer and last until first frost.

Cotoneaster dammeri

Evergreen. Fast growing. Branches can spread up to 10 feet. Easy to maintain. Excellent for erosion control. White flowers in spring, showy red berries in winter.

Cotula squalida *Brass Buttons*

Evergreen. Can tolerate sun and moderate foot traffic. Tight growing ground cover with foliage that is soft and almost fern-like. Gray-green in color, tinged with bronze in the fall. Flowers are small yellow buttons.

Euonymus fortunei *'Kewensis'*

Evergreen. Light foot traffic. Green tiny leaves, nice trailing plant. Good for erosion control.

Fragaria chiloensis *Ornamental Strawberry*
Dark green, glossy leaves take on red tints in winter. White flower in spring produces bright red berries in the fall. Forms low, compact mats.

Hedera *sp.* *Ivy*

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

Laurentia fluviatilis *Blue Star Creeper*
Star-shaped, light blue flowers that can bloom throughout the spring and summer. Can take moderate foot traffic. Good around stepping stones.

Mentha requienii *Corsican Mint*

Can tolerate light foot traffic. Prefers moist, rich soil. Mint fragrance. Forms tight green carpet. Tiny lavender flowers in summer. Perfect between stones.

Muehlenbeckia axillaris nana *Creeping Wire Vine*

Tiny, glossy, dark green leaves on wiry stems. Once established, prefers drought conditions. Great for rock gardens.

Potentilla verna

Can take moderate foot traffic. Fast spreading runners are covered with dark green leaves. Yellow flowers blanket plant in the early summer. Good for choking out weeds once established.

Sagina subulata *Irish Moss*

Sagina subulata 'Aurea' *Scotch Moss*

Can take moderate foot traffic. Requires well draining soil and ample water. For best results, give partial shade in hot places. Dense, moss like tufts form a carpet of green or gold (Aurea). Small, white flowers. A great filler between paving stones.

Thymus sp. *Thyme*

Evergreen. Foliage and flowers vary. Great cover for sunny, dry areas. Tolerates light foot traffic. Summer blooms.

Vinca sp.

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

Waldsteinia fragarioides *Wild Strawberry*

Evergreen. Leaves are dark green forming a thick mat. Strawberry-like flowers in spring. Slow grower.

****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

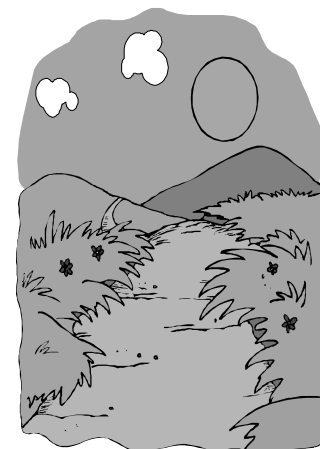
To calculate the number of plants needed, use the chart below. Use plant spacing info gathered from resources and find nearest match in first column. Then multiply your area's square footage by the corresponding figure in the right column. The result will be the approximate number of plants to fill your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

Ground Covers

**Plants for
sun**



PORTLAND
NURSERY

Information compiled from McCoy Nursery