

# groundcovers

When most people look at groundcovers they invariably imagine low-maintenance, cover-the-ground plants & yes, a mass of ivy will do that, but with a little thought & imagination you can do so much more.

Groundcovers can transform a bare sloping bank into a delight for the eye as well as prevent the bank from eroding away. They can replace the lawn where grass refuses to thrive. They can cover the bare ground between shrubs & fill in between paving stones & along garden paths or stairways.

Look at the variations in leaf texture, colour, size & shape. Instead of a lot of one thing why not plant compatible combinations? Consider fall or winter colour, berries (if any), flowers & their season of bloom. Add spring flowering bulbs that will naturalize among the groundcovers for seasonal colour. Install a birdbath, bench, gazebo, pond, statue or interesting boulders as accents.

Bringing together a variety of elements will create an ever-changing display for year-round colour & interest, yet

## planning & planting

- 1 Carefully analyze light, soil & moisture conditions then select plants to match your site.
- 2 Modify your soil, if necessary, with manure, compost or peat moss. Your goal is a loose, rich soil with both good drainage & water retention capabilities.
- 3 Dig the planting holes & add a handful of bonemeal.
- 4 Using landscape fabric in the area to be planted goes a long way in discouraging weeds. See us for more instructions if needed.
- 5 Water regularly for the first year or until the plants are well-established.
- 6 Fertilize every spring with an all-purpose fertilizer such as 6-8-6 or 14-14-14 to keep your groundcover thick & vigorous.

## choosing the right plant

SELECT THE RIGHT PLANT FOR THE RIGHT SITUATION!

For example, if you need to cover a steep slope & suppress erosion, choose plants with vigorous underground root systems such as Hypericum or Pygmy Bamboo. The network of roots will help to hold the soil in place. In shady sites make sure your choices are shade tolerant so they will be able to withstand low light levels.

### groundcovers for full sun

THESE GROUNDCOVERS DO WELL WITH 6 HOURS OF MID-DAY SUN PER DAY: Bergenia, Blue Fescue, Ceanothus gloriosus, Cotoneaster, Creeping Thyme, Daylilies, Elymus (Lyme Grass), Euonymus, Genista 'Vancouver Gold', Geranium macrorrhizum, Heather, Helianthemum, Hypericum (St. John's Wort), Ivy, Juniper, Kinnikinnick (Vancouver Jade), Vaccinium (Lingonberry), Lithodora, Potentilla 'Yellow Gem', Ribbon Grass, Salal, Sedum.

### groundcovers for shade

THESE GROUNDCOVERS GROW WELL WITH LESS THAN 6 HOURS OF SUN PER DAY. THOSE UNDERLINED WILL TOLERATE LESS THAN 2 HOURS OF SUN PER DAY: Ajuga, Alchemilla mollis (Lady's Mantle), Asarum (wild gingers), Astilbe, Convallaria majalis (Lily-of-the-Valley), Corydalis, Cornus canadensis (Bunchberry), Carex morrowii (Japanese Sedge), Daylilies, Dicentra (Bleeding Hearts), Epimedium, Euonymus, Hardy Ferns, Galium odoratum (Sweet Woodruff), Gaultheria procumbens (Wintergreen), perennial Geranium, Hakonechloa 'Aureola' (Golden Forest Grass), Hostas, Houttuynia, Isotoma (Blue Star Creeper), Ivy (Algerian, English), Lamium (Silver Nettle), Luzula grass, Liriope (Lily-turf), Lysimachia, Mahonia repens, Pachysandra, Sagina subulata (Irish Moss), Salal, Sarcococca, Saxifraga 'London Pride', Soleirolia (Baby's Tears), Tiarella, Vinca (Periwinkle), Viola odorata & many more!

## those 'special' situations

### dry soil

Once established, these plants are very drought tolerant. Water regularly for the first year or so & thereafter only during extended periods of drought. Groundcovers for this situation include: Astilbe 'Pumila', Blue Fescue, Cistus, Cotoneaster, Euonymus, Genista 'Vancouver Gold', Geranium macrorrhizum, Helianthemum, Juniper, Kinnikinnick (Vancouver Jade), Lamium (Silver Nettle), Salal, Sarcococca, Sedum, Sempervivums (Hens & Chicks), Hypericum (St. John's Wort), Rubus, Vinca (Periwinkle).

### **steep slopes or banks**

These plants are valued for erosion control. In very steep situations you may want to consider stabilizing the slope with wire mesh before planting. For fun create a 'stream' effect with plants (Ivy banked by Cotoneaster) or river rock. In shade, use Hakonechloa Grass as a golden 'waterfall' near the top of the bank. Other groundcovers for this situation include: Pygmy Bamboo, Cistus, Cotoneaster, Daylilies, Elymus (Lyme Grass), Sword Fern, Ostrich Fern, Wood Fern 'Robusta', Genista 'Vancouver Gold', Heather, Hypericum (St. John's Wort), Ivy, Lamium (Silver Nettle), Junipers, Salal, Vinca (Periwinkle), Virginia Creeper.

### **mass planting in large areas**

Always use odd numbers of plants (3, 5 or more) rather than even. Using large numbers of just one type of plant will look like a solid mass. Using a variety of plants in different heights & shapes will add depth & dimension. The following are good 'spreaders' that often need a large area to be fully appreciated: Ajuga, Pygmy Bamboo, Cotoneaster, Threadleaf Cypress, Elymus (Lyme Grass), Euonymus, Genista 'Vancouver Gold', Heathers, Hypericum (St. John's Wort), Isotoma (Blue Star Creeper), Ivy, Junipers, Kinnikinnick (Vancouver Jade), Mugho Pines, Rubus, Salal, Vinca (Periwinkle).

### **lawn alternatives**

Does your lawn survive as opposed to thrive? Are you tired of mowing, watering, fertilizing, weeding, etc.? Did you know...

...lawn alternatives are becoming more popular as a low-maintenance substitution for grass;

...all of our selections are evergreen;

...you can dot your planted area with spring-flowering bulbs for seasonal colour?!

If we've got your attention have a look at some of our suggestions for lawn substitutes: Roman Chamomile, Cotoneaster, Euonymus, Blue Fescue, Genista 'Vancouver Gold', Hypericum (St. John's Wort), Ivy, Junipers, Moss (Irish & Scotch), Pachysandra, Rubus, Sedum, Creeping Thyme.

### **between paving stones**

LOW GROWING PLANTS THAT TOLERATE A BIT OF FOOT TRAFFIC: Acaena, Antennaria, Corsican Mint, Cotula, Hedyotis (Houstonia), Isotoma (Blue Star Creeper), Moss (Irish & Scotch), Creeping Speedwell, Creeping Thyme.

### **in rock gardens**

GREAT ADDITIONS TO ALL THE NOOKS & CRANNY'S OF A ROCKERY OR STONE WALL: Acaena, Alyssum saxatile, Antennaria, Arabis, Arenaria, Armeria, Campanulas, Candytuft, Cerastium, Black-Leaf Clover, Corsican Mint, Dianthus deltoides, Fragaria, Helianthemum, Hedyotis (Houstonia), Isotoma (Blue Star Creeper), Moss (Irish & Scotch), Sedum, Sempervivums (Hens & Chicks), Creeping Speedwell, Creeping Thyme, Viola odorata.

### **under trees & shrubs**

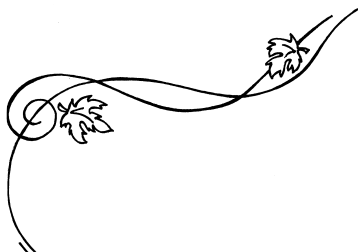
SHADE-LOVING PLANTS TOLERANT OF COMPETITION FROM TREE ROOTS FOR WATER & NUTRIENTS: Convallaria majalis (Lily-of-the-Valley), Cornus canadensis, Epimedium, Galium odoratum (Sweet Woodruff), Gaultheria procumbens (Wintergreen), Hedyotis, Ivy, Lamium, Lysimachia, Vaccinium (Lingonberry), Vinca (Periwinkle).

### **shrubs as groundcovers**

CONSIDER SOME OF THESE LOW GROWING PLANTS FOR INTERESTING HEIGHT & FOLIAGE VARIATIONS: Ceanothus, Clematis, Threadleaf Cypress, Hebe, Japanese Holly, Hemlock 'Jeddeloh', Juniper 'Blue Carpet', Juniper 'Blue Star', Mugho Pine, Pernettya, 'Carpet' Roses, Viburnum davidii.

## **alternative groundcovers (mulches)**

If you have a difficult site such as dry, dense shade under large conifers or low-limbed, shallow-rooted trees where no groundcover planting seems to thrive, mulches like bark mulch, lava rock, river rock or pea gravel can be used. Before putting in the mulch lay down a layer or two of black landscape fabric to prevent weeds from growing in the mulch.



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