

# GROUNDCOVERS - 2010



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Groundcovers can substitute for grass in difficult areas, be planted under trees, and check hillside erosion on steep slopes. The unique texture of groundcovers provides an interesting contrast to other plants.

Groundcovers are often given a tough assignment in the landscape, so plant them carefully. Work the soil well and add soil amendments such as peat moss or compost. If planting on a steep slope, mound the soil in a semicircle on the downhill side of each plant to aid in watering. Use a light dressing of 10-10-10 fertilizer. Mulch between plants to retain moisture and keep weeds down.

It's only a myth that groundcovers are maintenance free. No groundcover provides instant coverage. Most will take at least two years to fill in, and during that time they will require consistent weeding. Fertilize once a year in the spring with 10-10-10 fertilizer. Some varieties benefit from a periodic pruning or mowing.

Keep in mind that the more aggressive groundcovers may escape their intended spaces and will not be contained by traditional edging.

1. **AJUGA:** 4"-12" tall. Shiny green or bronze leaf. Blue flowers in the spring. Needs semi-shade location and moisture. Somewhat aggressive. Best in an area that normally receives snow cover. Space 6"-12".
2. **ARABIS (Rock Cress):** 6" tall. Green or variegated leaf. White or rose flowers in April-June. Attracts butterflies. Needs well-drained soil. Fairly drought tolerant. Full sun to light shade. Space 10" apart.
3. **ASARUM (Wild Ginger):** 6"-12" tall. Glossy, heart-shaped, evergreen leaf. Likes humus rich, moist soil in light to deep shade. bronze-brown flowers in May. Space 8"-12" apart. Not a true ginger - do not use as one!
4. **BERGENIA:** 12"-24" tall. Evergreen, cabbage-like leaf. Sun to medium shade. Not tolerant of heat. Red, pink, or white flowers in May. Red leaf color in fall. Space 12"-18" apart.
5. **CERASTIUM (Snow-in-Summer):** 3"-6" tall. Silvery, fuzzy leaf. White flowers in May-June. Prefers full sun and dry, well-drained locations. Moderately aggressive. Space 12" apart.
6. **CONVALLARIA (Lily-of-the-Valley):** 6"-8" tall. Dark green leaf. White, fragrant flowers in May. Shade to partial shade. Prefers a moist area. Aggressive. Space 8"-10" apart.
7. **EPIMEDIUM (Barrenwort):** 10"-12" tall. Red, yellow, or rose flowers in May. Light to medium shade. Best in moderately moist conditions. Reddish leaf in spring changes to rich green. Space 12"-15".
8. **FERNS:** Size depends on variety. Small ones like Japanese Painted or Leatherwood are about 12"-24" tall. Other varieties like Cinnamon or Royal can be 2'-5' tall. Most ferns prefer medium shade but some are tolerant of sun if there is adequate soil moisture.
9. **HOSTA:** There are many varieties and sizes to choose from. Some are various shades of green and some are variegated. Purple or white flowers in summer. Shade to part shade. Moderately aggressive. Spacing depends on variety selected.
10. **LAMIUM:** 6"-8" tall. Green leaves with silver or white variegation. Blue or pink flowers in spring. Sun to part shade. Moderately aggressive. Space 8"-10" apart.
11. **LYSIMACHIA (Moneywort):** 4"-6" tall. Green leaf. Yellow flower in June. Sun or shade. Prefers a moist, well-drained area. Aggressive. Space 12" apart.
12. **MUKDENIA:** This plant comes from China and is related to Heuchera. Foliage is a large, rounded fan shape. It starts out green and as the season progresses, red spreads from the leaf tips to gradually cover the entire leaf in bright red by fall. An excellent groundcover.
13. **PACHYSANDRA (Japanese Spurge):** 6"-12" tall. Green, evergreen leaf. No showy flowers. Shade, moisture, and acidity required. Needs adequate snow cover. Moderately aggressive. Space 6"-8" apart.
14. **PHLOX stolonifera (Creeping Phlox):** 4"-6" tall. Lavender, pink, or white blooms in April-May. Sun to very light shade. Space 8" apart.
15. **PRUNELLA:** Freeland Blue produces flowers of violet-blue almost all season. The flowers are borne on stems that reach 10" high. An excellent plant for borders, containers, and groundcover. Foliage is dark green.
14. **VINCA minor:** 6" tall. Dark green leaf. Blue flowers in spring. Sun to partial shade. Moderately aggressive. Space 6"-8" apart.

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