



NEW GARDEN
LANDSCAPING & NURSERY

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Ground Covers

Ground covers are low-maintenance, woody or herbaceous plants which cover the ground and may be used as an alternative to grass. Ground covers may also provide seasonal interest from their flowers, fruits, fall color, and interesting textures. There are ground covers which lose their leaves in winter (deciduous) or die back to the ground in winter (herbaceous), while evergreen varieties hold their leaves and offer year-round interest. A great many heights and plant forms are available to choose from for the home landscape.

Ground covers may be used to help stabilize slopes to control erosion, and several ground covers grow in tough conditions, such as poor, dry, heavily shaded, or excessively wet soils. Unlike turf or annuals, which usually require full sun to prosper, many ground covers flourish in full or partial shade or under trees and shrubs where competition for light, water, and food is great. We carry a wide variety of outstanding ground covers, many of which will thrive under the most difficult circumstances imaginable. A few of these include the huge ivy family, periwinkle, and ajuga; our trained staff can help you with the right choice for your site once you've determined the growing conditions.

PLANTING

Most ground cover plants prefer soils that are loamy, well-drained, and high in organic matter. Turn the soil over to a depth of 18 to 20 inches (being careful not to damage tree and shrubby roots), spread a layer of organic material (You are composting, aren't you? If not, you can use our Soil Conditioner), and add granular fertilizer according to manufacturers' recommendations. Work these materials into the soil using a spade or a rototiller. Rake the soil level and allow it to settle for several days before planting.

The best time to plant ground covers is in the spring. This allows the plant to have a long growing season in which to become established before the following winter. If you arrange the plants on the ground in a staggered row pattern (see reverse), the end result looks better and helps control erosion on slopes. Water regularly until the plants become established and new growth begins. Water requirements of different plants vary widely, but generally, a thorough watering every 7 to 10 days during dry spells should suffice.

MAINTENANCE

Ground covers demand little maintenance once established, although some tender loving care is required when they are first planted. We recommend that you mulch your new planting to control weed growth, to insulate the soil from temperature fluctuations, and to retain soil moisture. After the first year, fertilize established plantings in the spring using a light scattering of a 10-10-10 fertilizer or Plant Tone.

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There's more to a beautiful yard than trees, shrubs and grass. Ground covers can provide creative, low-maintenance, environmentally sensible alternatives to the dull, bland green expanses of turf that are so labor-intensive! Try something new, solve a problem, create a patch of color, have fun!



Ground Covers cont.

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Also remove dead branches or winter-damaged growth to encourage dense new growth. (Many ground covers, like periwinkle and liriopse, will actually benefit from an annual mowing, which removes old growth and allows the planting to become even more lush.)

QUANTITY

The number of plants it takes to cover a given area depends on several factors: the plant's growth rate, how quickly you want complete coverage, and the funds available for the project. Vining type ground covers are usually spaced about one foot apart. Refer to the chart and information below to help you determine the number of plants needed to cover your planting bed (and remember, we'll be happy to help with the calculations).

GROUND COVER SPACING	
4" _____	0.11
6" _____	0.25
8" _____	0.44
10" _____	0.70
12" _____	1.0
15" _____	1.56
18" _____	2.25
24" _____	4.0
36" _____	9.0
48" _____	16.0

Select the required spacing of the ground cover in the left column. Divide the number of square feet in your planting bed by the appropriate number in the right column. The resulting figure is the number of plants required to cover the bed. Example: a 5' x 10' bed = 50 square feet. Divide that figure by 1.56 for a result of 32.05. For a 50 square foot bed with plants spaced 15 inches apart, you'll need 32 plants.

STAGGERED ROW SPACING DIAGRAM

