



Groundcovers

Planting an area in the landscape with groundcover can transform it from dull and ordinary to lush with texture and beauty. It can also solve problems like hillside erosion or a hard-to-mow area.

Where to begin: Assess the area you want to turn into a groundcover planting. Check to see if it receives full sun, partial sun or full shade. Below is a list of plant suggestions to help you decide what would work best for your area.

Spring or early fall is the best time to plant groundcover. This allows the roots to become well established before winter. The plants will not heave out of the ground with the fluctuating freezing and thawing temperatures that happen in winter time. Groundcover can be planted in midsummer, but the watering requirement will be much greater to keep plants from drying out in the intense heat.

Begin by removing all sod or weeds from the area, either by digging up the sod or weeds or spraying an herbicide according to the label instructions. Once the sod or weeds are removed, check out your soil composition. Is it heavy clay, sandy and dry or rich with organic matter. Amend any heavy clay or sandy and dry soil with a 2-3 inch layer of compost, manure, leaf mold or organic matter to improve the soil and help plants grow and stay healthy.

Begin Planting: Once the groundcover area has been prepared and plants have been chosen, map out the area to determine how many plants will be needed. The number of plants needed will depend on how big they are and how wide the plants will spread. You may need fewer 1 gallon size plants than quart size potted plants.

If you are planning on installing a weed mat or landscape fabric to help control any weeds that may pop up in the middle of the groundcover area, start by laying out the fabric. Place the plants on top of the fabric, step back and make any adjustments to spacing. Once you have them where you like them, cut holes in the fabric beneath the pots and proceed to plant the groundcover plants. Mulch over top of the fabric. The fabric has pores to allow for air movement and moisture to penetrate to the soil level.

Maintenance: Continue to water throughout the summer and into late fall if rainfall is less than 1 inch per week. You may want to fertilize plants at some point if you feel a nutritional boost is in order. Espoma® Plant-Tone® 5-3-3 fertilizer will work. Broadcast the granules by hand for small areas or use a hand held broadcaster to distribute evenly for larger areas. Water in the fertilizer to wash off any granules from the leaves so it won't burn the foliage.

Common plants used for Groundcover

Ajuga (Bugleweed) – Partial sun to full shade
Alchemilla (Lady's Mantle) – Full sun to partial sun
Armeria (Thrift) – Full sun
Asarum (Wild ginger) – Partial to full shade
Bergenia – Full to partial shade
Cerastium (Snow in Summer) – Full sun
Convallaria (Lily-of-the-valley) – Partial to full shade
Delosperma (Ice plant) – Full sun
Epimedium – Partial to full shade
Festuca grass – full sun
Galium (Sweet Woodruff) – Partial to full shade
Geranium Hardy – Partial to full sun
Hemerocallis (Daylilies) – Partial to full sun
Heuchera (Coral Bells) – Partial to full sun
Hosta – Partial to full shade

Iberis (Candytuft) Full sun
Lamiaeum (Silver Archangel) – Partial to full shade
Leptinella (Brass Buttons) – Partial to full sun
Liriope (Lilytuft) – Partial sun
Pachysandra – Full sun to full shade
Phlox creeping – Full sun
Pennisetum Burgundy Bunny grass – Full sun
Saponaria (Soapwort) – Partial to full sun
Sedum (Stonecrop) – Full sun
Sempervivum (Hens & Chicks) – Full sun
Vinca – Partial to full sun

*Many more items can be used as groundcover just do a little research to make sure you like the growth habit to use for a mass planting