

Ground Cover

Ground covers are a type of plant that is chosen for the special task of providing low, attractive greenery. They possess many desirable traits and have come to play an increasingly important role in the landscape scheme. When ground covers are carefully chosen and utilized effectively, they greatly enhance the beauty of a planting composition.

In addition to their landscape value, ground covers fulfill other important functions. Wherever planted they help protect the soil, conserve moisture and, during periods of extreme heat, maintain lower temperatures in the soil, a matter of considerable importance in hot climates. When planted on steep banks they protect the soil from heavy rains and thus reduce the dangers of erosion. An added benefit is that by spreading their green carpet of foliage over areas of bare ground they help prevent the encroachment of weeds.

PLANTING

This can be done almost any time of the year that the soil can be dug. However, the longer the plant has to root in its first year, the more dramatic the effect for the following year. Bennett's recommends a quality root stimulator or a fertilizer high in available phosphorous to get your new plants off to a strong start. For our small peat pots, dig a hole slightly larger and deeper than the plug. Place the fibrous pot in the hole, gently cover with soil, tamp lightly with hands, and then thoroughly water. It is a good idea to mulch these new starts when planted. Do not allow the plants to dry out in their first year.

Spacing the plants every 12 –18" should fill your area within a couple of years, depending on the variety of plant you select. For a more dramatic and quicker effect, you can plant them closer. Often a zigzag line of plants looks more natural when first planted rather than a straight row.

GENERAL CARE

Maintenance of your new groundcover is fairly simple. Regular water and fertilizer, including an initial application of root stimulator, will encourage a well branched plant that will continue to flourish. Pruning may need to be done in early spring to encourage bushier plants on the semi-evergreen types. This is as easy as getting pruning shears out in February and snipping the old growth to the ground.

Planting small bulbs among your groundcover is a great way to add color in your landscape in early spring. Bulbs are generally as carefree as groundcover, and can benefit from the same fertilizer (high phosphorous) plant food. Some stunning additions include the incorporation of Grape Hyacinths, Botanical Tulips, Botanical Narcissus, Squill, Crocus, Puschkinia, Chionodoxa, Galanthus, and Anemone blanda.

PERENNIALS AS GROUNDCOVER

Many perennials have a clumping, spreading, or naturalizing effect and can be classified as either perennial or groundcover. Snow on the Mountain, Sweet Woodruff, Creeping Phlox, and Snow in Summer are just a few of these wonderful spreading perennials.

PLANTS FOR SPECIAL AREAS

Most of the varieties are tolerant of sun to part shade, with a few having a preference for shade. Below are some recommendations:

Groundcovers for shade:

English Ivy, Vinca, Pachysandra, Lilly Turf, Sweet Woodruff, Euonymus, Snow on the Mountain, Plumbago, Dead Nettle, Chameleon Plant, Irish Moss, Woodland Phlox, Bellflowers, Lady's Mantle, Brunnera, and Lily of the Valley

Groundcovers for sun:

Sedum, Euonymus, Vinca, Ajuga, Lily Turf, Creeping Phlox, Creeping Baby's Breath, Creeping Thyme, most of the mint family, Hardy Geranium, Hardy Ice Plant, Sun Rose, Lamb's Ears, Soapwort, Creeping Speedwell, Sedum, White and Blue Star Creeper, Snow in Summer, Candytuft, and Creeping Jenny

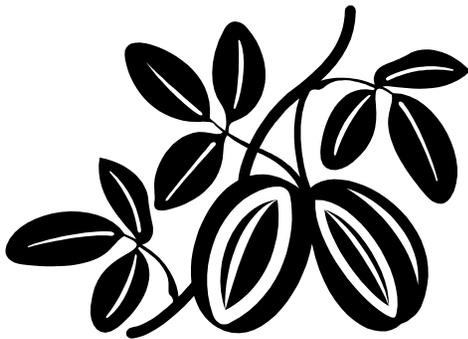
Grasses

Ribbon Grass, Sedges, Japanese Blood Grass, and Northern Sea Oats

Bennett's offers over 20 varieties of groundcover selections to fit sunny, shady, dry and moist areas. Some varieties flower, while others have semi-evergreen foliage for multi-season interest. Once established, groundcover is very carefree, generally drought tolerant and virtually maintenance free.

We at BENNETT'S are here every day to give "Helping Hand Hints" personally, one on one. Many gardening problems are very specific and we couldn't possibly cover all aspects in these pamphlets. Anytime you have a specific problem or need help, feel free to call. It is our job to help you be successful in your growing endeavors, and we thoroughly enjoy giving you a "helping hand".

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HELPING HAND HINTS



GROUND COVER