

GROUND COVERS & BEDDING PLANTS

Ground covers are used for aesthetics, erosion control (trees are best!), lower maintenance than grass, weed suppression, and wildlife habitat. Lawn grass is a ground cover, too, of course, but is high maintenance and is a “desert” for wildlife. Planting varied ground covers, either in lawn areas, garden beds, or along pathways, will yield riches in bird life, bee habitat, and general good vibes. A mixture of ground covers is a lot more interesting than a solid green lawn and can be beautiful in flower,

Consider taking this list with you to shop for plants. Most ground covers are inexpensive and you might see several that look interesting, buy them, some of each, and experiment to see which works best where.






One of the great things about gardening is that it's stressless, there are no permanent screw ups, everything can be replaced or relocated to a better spot at minimum cost and effort. Gardening is no pressure, sunny day work only.






Ground covers are easy to plant. Shallow rooted plants like ajuga and creeping thyme can be planted in a bed of mulch or mulch/top soil over ground that has been scalped with a mower and then scratched to break the surface. Always water daily for the first week then every other day in warm weather, at least once a week the first season. All plants come with planting instructions but, if in doubt, consult one of our charming, indigenous garden club members.






Excellent book with recommendations, photos, instructions, etc.






[Groundcover Revolution](#) by Kathy Jentz (available in paperback or Kindle)

GROUND COVERS

	<p><u>Clover, Mini-Clover, and Micro-Clover</u></p>	<p>An ideal turfgrass substitute needs little mowing, stays green all year, and makes its own fertilizer, adding nitrogen to the soil. Lovely flowers in season, prized by bees. This is not the “lawn desert” that a grass lawn creates. Grown from seed, just like a grass lawn.</p>
	<p><u>Creeping Wire Vine Muehlenbeckia</u></p>	<p>A dense evergreen. Stepable (resists occasional foot steps), tough, fast-spreading, and low-maintenance. A versatile creeper, grows in sunny or partial shade, with any type of well-draining soil.</p>
	<p><u>Lamium</u></p>	<p>Green mottled gray leaves. Likes shade, Grows even in deep shade. Nice little yellow flowers. A lovely shade-bed plant</p>
	<p><u>Prairie Geranium</u></p>	<p>Does well in day-long but not intense shade. Beautiful in and out of flower, proliferates like a bunny.</p>
	<p><u>Creeping phlox (Phlox stolonifera)</u></p>	<p>NATIVE Up to 1' Part to full shade. Flowers in late spring. Deer resistant.</p>

	<p><u>Moss phlox</u> (Phlox subulata)</p>	<p>NATIVE 6". Sun. Evergreen. Pink or white flowers in spring.</p>
	<p><u>Pachysandra</u></p>	<p>An indestructible sun or deep shade loving plant that will exclude almost any weeds (or other plants). Probably the most common ground cover in the neighborhood. Yes, it is that one in your neighbor's yard that you never noticed because it is just dense and thoroughly 100% of the time "green". Does not tolerate foot traffic, so best as a ground cover where it will not be trampled. Deer will not eat it. Evergreen. Takes time to establish, but, once established, is a dense ground cover, so can be considered aggressive and needs to be contained. Consider interspersing this with some native alternatives and "accent" plants or ferns.</p>
	<p><u>Allegheny Spurge</u> (Pachysandra procumbens)</p>	<p>NATIVE. This is the native alternative to pachysandra. It grows about a foot tall in part to full shade and average to moist soil. Evergreen, spring bloomer.</p>
	<p><u>Creeping Thyme</u></p>	<p>Many varieties, Woolly, Golden... will form a low, thick blanket, spreading slowly in shade but rapidly in enough sunlight. Will offer mats of purple or golden flowers. It is steppable.. All gardeners and other good people deserve creeping thyme.</p>
	<p><u>Trailing Ice Plant</u></p>	<p>Contrasting texture to more two-dimensional plants (like creeping thyme) . Needs sun. Dies back in winter.</p>

	<p><u>Mountain (Wild) stonecrop</u> (<u>Sedum ternatum</u>)</p>	<p>NATIVE Up to 6". Part to full shade. Leaves are succulent, and plant roots very shallowly. White flowers in spring. Slow-spreading semi-evergreen groundcover.</p>
	<p><u>Dwarf-crested Iris</u></p>	<p>NATIVE. Not steppable. Spring flowers. Leaves die back in winter, but are lovely in beddings for color. Rabbit and deer do not usually bother this plant. Handles part sun to light shade and most soil and moisture types. Spreads slowly. It's hard to go wrong with this one!</p>
	<p><u>Lamb's Ear</u></p>	<p>Ever see a plant that looks like a pile of lamb's ears? That's Lamb's Ear. Fuzzy, light gray-green leaves, it is tactile unlike any other plant, attracts toddlers and honey bees, offers a contrast in color, texture and structure, Best in sun but can handle limited shade. Spreads aggressively. Trim back after blooming (tall purple spikes). Deer and rabbits will not eat it.</p>
	<p><u>Carex also called Sedge</u></p>	<p>A very tough grassy plant that grows in mounds and spreads. Many different varieties, colors, and sizes. Very tough needs limited light. Good for edging or steep slopes where nothing else can hold sway. Goes dormant in winter and needs periodic division and replanting. Good native choices include Palm sedge, which handles light shade and drier conditions, grows slowly into a drift; Blue wood sedge (Carex glaucoidea) for part shade and grows in an attractive clump; and Pennsylvania sedge (Carex pennsylvanica) for sun to part shade, which you can grow as a lawn. .</p>
	<p><u>Grape Hyacinth</u></p>	<p>Bulbs that can be planted among other low bedding and ground cover plants. Lovely tiny purple spikes in early spring. Deer and rabbits may browse the leaves, so be sure to spray with deer repellent.</p>

	<p><u>Blue Star Creeper</u></p>	<p>Hardy, steppable, and quickly forms a dense blanket. Can be used as a lawn.</p>
	<p><u>Plumbago (Ceratostigma plumbaginoides)</u></p>	<p>A seasonal spreading ground cover that has nice blue flowers, suffers shade poorly but worth a try someplace with a couple of hours of direct sun. Attracts butterflies. 12" partial to light shade, small blue flowers in fall, foliage turns red in fall.</p>
	<p><u>Mondo Grass & Dwarf Mondo Grass</u></p>	<p>Dwarf mondo will create a dense cover. Spreading and mounding grasses do not need to be mowed. Evergreen. Can be aggressive/invasive, so keep it where you want it and don't let it get out of control.</p>
	<p><u>Corsican Mint</u></p>	<p>A low-growing evergreen, steppable, versatile, growing in sun or shade, in dry or moist areas. Dainty white blooms in the spring into summer, could be a green mulch between larger plants or between stepping stones. Can be used as a lawn plant</p>
	<p><u>Moss</u></p>	<p>In GFC there is one beautiful, sizable patch of moss flourishing in moist shade and on acidic soil where nothing else will grow, fragile, not steppable but green all year . It envelops tree roots in an undulating blanket, requires no care, yearns to be petted.</p>



Veronica
'Waterperry
blue', Speedwell

A low, creeping perennial, steppable, grows 5 inches tall and spreads 15 inches wide, deep green leaves turn coppery in fall and tiny (1/2"), round, lavender-blue flowers which bloom in the spring and intermittently throughout the summer.



Green-and-Gold
(Chrysogonum
virginianum)

NATIVE. Partial to medium shade, looks great naturalized with other woodland plants, mature height to 4 inches, rhizome forms a clump upwards of 36 inches wide. Prefers moist, well-draining soil, but can handle average soil. Blooms in late spring; semi-evergreen and deer resistant.



Partridgeberry
(Mitchella
repens)

NATIVE. Up to 6". Part to full shade. Evergreen. White flowers in early spring followed by red berries.




Wintergreen
(Gaultheria
procumbens)

NATIVE. Up to 6". Part to full shade. Evergreen. Glossy leaves, white to pink flowers in summer, red berries.











Bearberry
(Arctostaphylos
uva-ursi)





NATIVE. Extremely hardy, Bearberry forms an attractive dense groundcover in situations where few other plants can survive. Spreading gradually by surface rhizomes to form a mat, it grows naturally near sandy beaches and dry rocky slopes. Perfect for rock gardens, Bearberry looks great trailing over a garden wall. 6-12" Full sun to partial shade. Evergreen. pinkish-white flowers and red fruit.

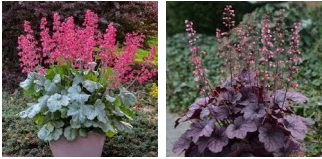




	<p>Sweet woodruff (<i>Galium odoratum</i>)</p>	<p>Up to 12". Part to full shade. Small, white flowers in spring; fragrant, whorled, foliage.</p>
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BEDDING PLANTS -

	<p>St. Johns Wort</p>	<p>Shrub-like ground cover, tough and spreads slowly to exclude all else. Nice but unimpressive yellow flowers, green for about 9 months a year. Good for contrast. Considered an antidepressant in Germany, maybe if you meditate on it cause imbibing it does zip. Deer wont eat it, but deer are naturally mellow. Approx. 12" tall.</p>
	<p>Sweet Box</p>	<p>Narrow, shiny-leaved evergreen shrub that can range in height from 2 to 4 feet tall. It has tiny insignificant flowers in spring which are famous for their intense perfume. It spreads very very slowly but it is unstoppable. Deer will not eat it.</p>
	<p>Blue-eyed grass (<i>Sisyrinchium angustifolium</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE. Can grow 12-18", but is usually about 6" tall. Sun to part shade. Lovely little blue flowers in spring. Native. Deer resistant. Grows in clumps and spreads by seed. Easy to grow.</p>

	<p><u>Common blue violet</u> (<i>Viola sororia</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE Up to 8". Part shade, and okay with all but the driest soil patch. Blue -violet or white flowers in early spring. A host plant for the Crescent butterflies that are sometimes seen in Old Farm. Can spread readily by seed. Can also grow in your lawn for added greenery and lovely spring flowers. Very aggressive, and will crowd out grass and escape into flower beds.</p>
	<p><u>False Solomon's-seal</u> (<i>Maianthemum racemosum</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE 1-3' tall. Part to full shade. White flowers in spring, red berries in fall. Plant grows in a graceful arching stem from which the flowers hang like bells. Dramatic looking. Deer sometimes browse, though, so spray with repellent early in the season.</p>
	<p><u>Golden groundsel or golden ragwort</u> (<i>Packera aurea</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE A practically perfect groundcover. Grows up to 2', with leaves tending to be lower. Leaves stay green in the winter. Sun to shade, average to moist soils. Long-lasting lovely yellow flowers in spring, often the first blooms of the season. Deer and rabbit resistant. Spreads nicely to fill in an area.</p>
	<p><u>Foamflower</u> (<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE Up to 1'. Sun to shade, in average to moist soils. Lovely white flowers in spring. Stays green in winter. Deer resistant. Can be outcompeted so make sure to keep more aggressive plants at bay.</p>
	<p><u>Wild bleeding heart</u> (<i>Dicentra eximia</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE 1-2'. Part-shade to shade. Fern-like foliage. Deep pink drooping heart-shaped flowers in April-June. Dies back in winter.</p>

	<p><u>Rock cotoneaster</u> (<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE. 1-2', Sun to part shade. Evergreen. White flowers, red berries. Spreading, good for slopes.</p>
	<p><u>Lyreleaf sage</u> (<i>Salvia lyrata</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE. Up to 2'. Sun to part shade. Violet flowers in spring. Aggressive.</p>
	<p><u>Ferns!!!</u></p>	<p>Not stepable and all die back in winter, but deer and bunnies won't eat ferns, and they come in innumerable colors, shapes, and sizes. Most ferns spread well in shade or part-shade, and are lovely under trees, around shrubs, next to fences, etc. Here's a partial list of native varieties:</p> <p>Christmas fern (<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>) 1-3'. Part to full shade. Evergreen. Cinnamon fern (<i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i>) 2-4'. Sun to full shade. Hay-scented fern (<i>Dennstaedtia punctilobula</i>) 1-3'. Light shade. Aggressive Intermediate Wood fern (<i>Dryopteris intermedia</i>) Up to 2.5'. Part to full shade. Evergreen. Northern maidenhair fern. (<i>Adiantum pedatum</i>) 1-2'. Part to full shade. Marginal wood fern (<i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>) 1-3'. Part shade. Evergreen. New York fern (<i>Thelypteris noveboracensis</i>) 1-2'. Part to full shade. Ostrich fern (<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>) 1-3'. Part to full shade. Fern Cohen (<i>Batya Kohain</i>) NATIVE 5'8" Red hair. Looks good in full sun or shade,</p>
	<p><u>Hellebores - Lenten Rose</u></p>	<p>12 to 18 inches tall. They can grow thickly over large areas in shade. They are the first plants to bloom every year when the rest of the garden is ghastrly. Flower color ranges are wide from off white to violet and even dark purple. Some keep their flowers hidden under the leaf envelope., so check that the strain you plant will present its blossoms above the leaf structure. Evergreen, but last year's leaves should be removed when new growth emerges.</p>

	<p><u>Heuchera</u></p>	<p>There may be 100 varieties and they all do well in deep shade adding a wide variety of contrasting leaf colors. NATIVE varieties include: Coral Bells (Heuchera americana), a deer-resistant plant with flower stalks up to 24 inches tall. It is not fussy about soil moisture. Spring bloomer. Hairy alumroot (Heuchera villosa) 1-2'. Flower spikes in summer. Also deer resistant.</p>
	<p><u>Jacob's ladder (Polemonium reptans)</u></p>	<p>NATIVE. Up to 12". Part to full shade. Spreading. Light blue flowers in spring. Does not tolerate drought well.</p>
	<p><u>Wild ginger (Asarum canadense)</u></p>	<p>NATIVE Grows 6-8". Part shade, medium-wet to medium-dry soil. Roots very shallow, so it is easy to divide and transplant. When plants emerge in spring, they immediately put out interesting maroon flowers, hidden beneath the leaves. .Ants pollinate this plant. Heart-shaped dark green foliage.</p>
	<p><u>Bigroot geranium (Geranium macrorrhizum)</u></p>	<p>12-18". Part to light shade. Magenta flowers in early summer. Foliage apple-scented, nearly evergreen. Deer resistant. Other option, Wild Geranium cultivars.</p>
	<p><u>Rue anemone (Thalictrum thalictroides)</u></p>	<p>NATIVE. Up to 1'. Part to full shade. White flowers in spring. Goes dormant in summer. Rue Anemone is best planted under deciduous trees. It prefers dappled sunlight during the spring, but tolerates considerable shade later in the year. Moisture levels should be mesic to slightly dry, and the soil should contain loose loam and rotting organic material. Most growth and develop occurs during the spring; it is not aggressive.</p>

	<p><u>Lungwort</u> (<i>Pulmonaria saccharata</i>)</p>	<p>Up to 12". Part to full shade. Freckled foliage, Pink/blue flowers in spring. Deer resistant.</p>
	<p><u>Epimedium</u> (<i>Epimedium x rubrum</i>)</p>	<p>12" part to full shade. Small red flowers in spring, bronze foliage in fall.</p>
	<p><u>Siberian bugloss</u> (<i>Brunnera macrophylla</i>)</p>	<p>1'. Part to full shade. Tiny blue flowers in spring. Deer resistant.</p>
	<p><u>American bittersweet</u> (<i>Celastrus scandens</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE. 6-20' Vine. Sun to shade. Greenish flowers in summer. Orange/red fruit in fall. Yellow fall color.</p>
	<p><u>Virginia creeper</u> (<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>)</p>	<p>NATIVE. 30' Vine. Sun to shade. White flowers in summer. Black berries in fall. Crimson foliage in fall. Disappears in winter leaving bare ground.</p>






INVASIVE PLANTS TO AVOID

THESE TAKE OVER, ARE NOT NATIVE, AND DAMAGE PARKS AND COMMON LANDS
THEY MAY BE AVAILABLE IN GARDEN STORES, SO BEWARE!

The links below have more extensive lists, and the second link has excellent descriptions and photos:

<https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Documents/Invasive-Plant-List-March-2020.pdf>

https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/Invasive_plants_cards.pdf

	<u>Vinca - Periwinkle</u>	Indestructible and spreads aggressively, it can crowd out or overcome plants you like. Lovely flowers in many colors. Stepable and evergreen. Deer won't eat it. Toxic to dogs. Can be invasive, so don't plant near any parks or natural areas. Outlawed in Delaware.
	<u>English Ivy</u>	This will grow everywhere and is hard to remove, once established. It climbs and kills trees and shrubs. If you allow it to grow on your house, the clinging roots will eat away at the surface of bricks, and it will grow into and behind siding and gutters. Forget the "ivy-covered" academic campuses, this plant destroys buildings.
	<u>Japanese Barbery</u>	Thorny shrub with spoon-shaped leaves and red berries.
	<u>Japanese Honeysuckle</u>	Common in parks. Will choke out native plants.
	<u>Garlic Mustard</u>	This is all over the place, found in our gardens and parks. Pull it out when you see it!

