

HOW TO



Decide on GROUND COVER PLANTS

Ground Cover plants are low growing and spread to form a dense, leafy mat. They can be used in permanent planting to cover areas of ground and provide colour from flowers and foliage. There are numerous uses for Ground Covers - they provide greenery beneath taller shrubs and trees, hide stumps and manhole covers, edge shrubberies, clothe low walls and cover banks.

One of the many advantages of Ground Cover plants is their suppression of weeds, however, they should never be regarded as eliminators of established weeds - before planting, always remove every bit of perennial weed root from the soil. Deep rooted weeds such as Couch Grass, Thistles, Dandelions etc., need to be treated with 'Tumbleweed' prior to planting.

Some plants are more tolerant of certain conditions than others. It is for that reason we have listed plants in the categories they thrive in, i.e. open sun, dry shade,... It can be seen from the list that there is a large range of plants suitable for Ground Cover and we haven't listed them all!

Almost all of the Alpines available make excellent ground cover and many plants grown as climbers will grow just as well on the ground. Roses are perhaps the most popular of all garden plants and there are certain varieties that are specifically for ground cover. Conifers also provide excellent ground cover, the most popular being 'Juniperus'. These are widely used to cover unsightly objects such as manholes.

The main attraction with conifers is their attractive foliage. As well as the variegated and green types, there is a large selection of Juniperus with yellow foliage and these look especially superb in the winter months.

Choosing a Plant

There are three factors to consider - the height of the plant (*this can range from a few inches to 3'0"*), the soil type (*some are lime haters*) and the location (*choose shade tolerant types for planting under shrubs and sun lovers for clothing exposed banks*).

SUNNY SITES

Perennials

Ajuga
Alchemilla mollis
Arabis E.
Astilbe
Aubrietia E.
Bergenia E.
Cerastium E.
Dicentra
Erigeron
Euphorbia
Geraniums
Heathers
Helianthemum E.
Heuchera E.
Lamium
Persicaria
Sedum
Veronica

Shrubs

Cotoneaster E.
Euonymus fortunei E.
Hebes
Hedera (Ivy) E.
Hypericum E.
Viburnum E.
Vinca E.

Conifers

Juniper species E.
Taxus species E.

SHADY SITES

Perennials

Ajuga
Alchemilla W.
Anemone nemorosa
Astilbe W.
Bergenia D.
Convallaria
Dicentra
Epimedium
Euphorbiaamygalloides
Ferns
Geranium
Hosta W.
Mimulus W.
Saxifraga
Sedum D.
Symphytum
Thyme D.
Tiarella D.
Veronica
Vincas
Viola
Waldsteinia

Shrubs

Cotoneaster
Euonymus
Gaultheria
Hypericum
Mahonia
Pachysandra



Planting

Good preparation is important and this encourages the plant to quickly establish itself. This is done by simply digging over the area and incorporating peat and bonemeal at the same time.

Sometimes, better results are achieved by planting in groups of three's or five's, however this does depend on the vigour of the plant and the area to be covered.

