

Ground Covers

Ground Covers

Ground covers are any woody or herbaceous perennial plant that spreads to cover an area. They are usually low maintenance. Secondly, they may provide seasonal interest from flowers, fruit, and interesting textures. Often they are used to stabilize slopes thereby controlling erosion to areas with poor growing conditions. Most ground covers are low growing, while a few are not low growing to the ground.

Considerations

- Best planting time is in the spring, allowing plants to have a long growing season.
- Arrange new plants in staggered rows.
- Mulch new plants to control weed growth and to retain soil moisture.
- Water regularly when first planted using a slow drip irrigation. This is especially beneficial where slopes are involved as water tends to run off when applied at high rates. Once established water it times of drought.
- Fertilize lightly after first year with an appropriate fertilizer

Ground cover spacing

and how to figure the number of plants you will need.

Select the required spacing of the ground cover plants in the left column. Divide the number of square feet in your planting area by the corresponding number in the right column. The resulting figure is the number of plants required to cover the area.

Space	Denominator
4"	0.11
5"	0.25
8"	0.44
10"	0.70
12"	1.00
15"	1.56
18"	2.25
24"	4.00
36"	9.00
48"	16.00

Example: To cover a 10' x 10' planting bed with plants spaced at 15", determine the square footage (10' x 10' = 100 sq. feet). Then divide by 1.56 (from chart). The answer is 64.10 or 64 plants.



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Ground Covers

The most common ground cover plants growing well in shade or partial shade are *Pachysandra terminalis*, *Hedera* sp. (Ivy) and *Vinca minor* (Myrtle).

Other Ground Covers

Sun

Bearberry - *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*
Bugleweed - *Ajuga*
Creeping Juniper - *Juniperus horizontalis*
Crown Vetch - *Retchii*
Euphorbia - Spurge
Forsythia - Dwarf and standard varieties
Ice Plant - *delosperma cooperii*
Lamb's Ear - *Stacky's*
Mazus - *Mazu retrans*
Moss-pink - *Phlox subulata*
Ornamental Strawberry - *Fragaria*
Snow in Summer - *Creastium*
Speedwell - *Veronica*
Stonecrop - *Sedum*
Thyme - *Thymus praecox*

Shade

Bishops Weed -
Chameleon - *Houttyenia*
Christmas Fern - *Polystichum acrostichoides*
Creeping Phlox - *Phlox stolonifera*
Foam Flower - *Tiarella cordifolia*
Irish Moss - *Sagina sabulata*
Leadwort - *Ceratostigma*
Lily of the Valley - *Convallaria*
Red Twig & Yellow Twig Dogweed - *Cornus elegantissima alba leutia*
Sweet Woodruff - *Galium odoratum*

Note: Although Hostas & Daylilies are not technically ground covers, they are easy to grow and are commonly used to cover a ground area. Hostas can be used in shaded areas and Daylilies can be used in sunny areas.



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