



## LAWN SUBSTITUTES

Lawns are appropriate for areas that receive heavy traffic or aggressive play by pets and children. However, grass is frequently planted in areas that are difficult (if not impossible) to water and maintain. These areas are usually narrow, steep, shady, or extremely hot and sunny. All areas should be evaluated to determine if they are suitable for growing turfgrass. Areas that are not suitable should be converted to a lawn substitute or groundcover.

A well-chosen groundcover can provide the same advantages as lawn without high maintenance and water requirements. Groundcovers provide cooling for buildings and year-round color, choke out weeds, and spread by themselves. Evergreen groundcovers need the least amount of maintenance and have color and texture during all the seasons. Groundcover selection is based on finding the right plant for the existing conditions of sun, shade, drought or moisture.

To convert a lawn area to groundcover start by removing the grass, using one of the methods described in *C068 Lawn Renovation*. Then till and prepare the area for planting. Amend the whole area with at least 3 yards of compost or composted manure per 1000 square feet. This will encourage moisture retention and spreading of the groundcover by shoots or runners.

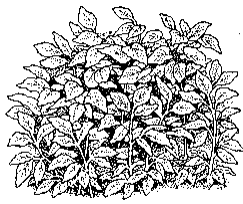
Groundcover areas can be watered most efficiently with drip irrigation. Regular spacing of the plants allows the system to be tailored to them. Applying water directly to the plant roots with drip irrigation reduces wasted water and inhibits weed growth.

### GROUNDCOVERS FOR THE INLAND NORTHWEST

#### *Achillea millefolium* - Common yarrow

This aggressive, drought tolerant perennial can be treated as an infrequently mowed groundcover. Plant it in spring by mixing 1/2 lb. of seed with 1/2 lb. of sand per 1000 sq. ft. and broadcasting over a prepared area. Press seeds in with a lawn roller to assure good seed-soil contact. Mow 2-8 times per year to 3-4" as desired and water only during the dry parts of the summer. Spreads easily from runners so be sure you put it in an area where you want it to spread.





***Aegopodium podagraria* 'Variegatum' - Goutweed**

This vigorous and sometimes invasive groundcover is suitable for partial shade or full shade and needs moderate watering. Spreads by creeping underground rootstocks and can be mown 2-3 times per year to keep it low and uniform. Plant 18-24 inches apart.

***Ajuga reptans* - Carpet bugle**

Carpet bugle is grown best in full sun or partial shade and requires regular watering. Grows 4-6 inches tall with numerous varieties sporting colorful leaves and flowers. Spreads quickly by underground runners. Plant 12 inches apart.



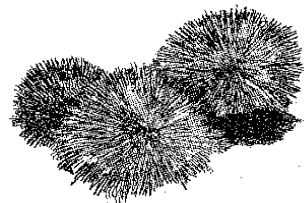
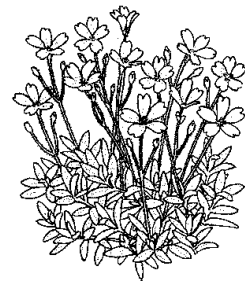
***Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* - Kinnikinnick  
(native to the Inland Northwest)**

A slow growing, drought resistant groundcover, with woody stems, leathery evergreen leaves and small white or pinkish flowers. Good groundcover for areas with full sun or part shade. Plant 2-3 feet apart. Mulch with fine bark or compost to control weeds during establishment. Can withstand occasional light foot traffic.



***Cerastium tomentosum* - Snow-in-summer**

Spreading, dense mats of silvery gray leaves are crowned with distinctive masses of snow-white flowers. Performs well in full sun or partial shade on well-drained soils. Often used to cover sunny banks or cascade over walls.



***Festuca ovina glauca* - Blue fescue**

Blue fescue is an ornamental grass that is low growing and very drought tolerant. It is a bunch grass that forms blue-gray tufts about 8-10 inches high. Useful as an accent in mixing with other drought tolerant groundcovers. Plant 12-18 inches apart.

***Galium odoratum* - Sweet woodruff**

Sweet woodruff is especially useful in shady moist spreading perennial grows 6-12 inches high with appearing in May. Will cover areas completely if



areas. This attractive low small white flower clusters conditions are right.



***Juniperus horizontalis* - various cultivars**

Creeping junipers are woody evergreen groundcovers for sunny areas with poor soil and limited water. Various cultivars grow from 1 to 12 inches tall and spread to 10'. There are many foliage colors, ranging from steel blue to turquoise green.

***Phlox subulata* - Creeping phlox**

Creeping phlox is covered with flowers ranging from white to pink to rose and lavender blue in the spring. Spreading with needle-like evergreen leaves, it forms mats to 6 inches tall. Phlox grows best in full sun and loose, average soil.



***Potentilla verna* or *P. tabernaemontanii* - Spring cinquefoil**

A dainty creeping groundcover with bright green leaves growing to only 1 inch high. ¼-inch butter yellow flowers are borne in clusters in spring and summer. Good lawn substitute for no-traffic areas. Smothers weeds effectively once established.

***Sedum spp* - Stonecrop**

A good groundcover for areas with poor soil full sun. *S. anglicum* grows 2-4 inches tall with dark green leaves. There are many other species and cultivars. Useful as a cover for banks, rocky slopes and other difficult areas.



***Stachys byzantina* - Lamb's ears**

The soft, thick, white woolly leaves form a dense spreading groundcover. Useful when mixed with other drought tolerant groundcovers in sun or light shade. Leaves grow to 8 inches, flower stems to 18 inches.

***Thymus pseudolanuginosus* - Woolly thyme**

Woolly thyme forms very flat mats about an inch or less in height. Useful in areas without heavy foot traffic and between stepping stones. Drought tolerant, sometimes needing water in hottest parts of summer when used in full sun between stepping-stones.

