



GROUND COVERS

Grass is the best-known ground cover, but it is not suited to all locations. Other ground cover plants should be used where grass is difficult to grow or maintain. These ground covers are low-growing plants—no taller than 3 feet—that cover the ground in mat-forming or trailing plants. Most ground covers are not intended to be walked on or mowed. In fact, in most cases, damage is caused by pedestrian traffic. Newly cut banks and slopes, greater than a 12-degree grade, are best treated with ground cover plantings. Around buildings, ground covers are superior to paving for reducing heat, glare, noise, and dust. In addition, they effectively reduce maintenance work and put the finishing touch on landscaping projects. Some ground covers can provide a habitat and an environment that encourages a diverse population of birds, insects, and other small critters.

Locations for Ground Covers

Ground covers are used most frequently in the following locations:

- Steep banks or slopes
- Shady areas under trees or next to buildings
- Under plantings in shrub borders and beds
- Where tree roots grow close to the surface and prevent grass from growing
- Very wet or dry locations

Functions of Ground Covers

When ground covers are chosen carefully and placed correctly, they enhance the beauty of the landscape. A great many plants can be used as ground covers, producing patterns with variation in height, texture,

and color. In addition, ground covers fulfill a number of practical functions:

- Control erosion on slopes
- Obstruct foot traffic without impeding the view
- Conserve soil moisture
- Reduce lawn maintenance
- Provide vegetative growth where grass is difficult to maintain

“Ground covers are a good, water-wise alternative for lawns.” –Mo Lynch, GEMG

Selection of Ground Covers

Selection of a ground cover will depend upon the area where it will be grown. Soil conditions must be studied. Some ground cover plants, such as pachysandra, require a moist, fertile soil in partial shade; others, such as bishop’s weed, thrive in partial to deep shade in poor soil. Ice plant likes full sun in average soil.

Your choice of an evergreen, perennial, or herbaceous ground cover will depend on your preference. Consideration should be given to herbaceous ground covers, as they will greatly increase your choices of colors, textures, sizes and forms. Since some ground covers tend to grow rampantly beyond their intended borders, due consideration should be given to the spread and growth patterns of each. A possible problem that limits the use of a specific ground cover is the cost of installation since large numbers of small individual plants are needed.

Preparation of Planting Area

A well-prepared planting bed will help to develop a dense, healthy ground cover. Where possible, soil should be worked to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. Organic materials, such as leaf mold, compost, or well-rotted manure, open pore space in clay and improve the water-holding capacity of sandy soils. Eight to ten bushels of organic materials per 100 square feet incorporated 6 to 8 inches deep may be necessary in poor soils. Not all ground covers, however, require fertile soil, but most require well-drained soil.

A soil test provides best guidance for fertilizer and soil pH usage. Without this information, a general rule would be to use 4 pounds of a commercial fertilizer, such as 5-10-5, per 100 square feet. Mix the fertilizer into the soil at a depth of 6 to 8 inches and include in this the proper amount of product that is indicated in the soil sample result. Most ground cover plants can be planted at anytime during the growing season; however, either spring or fall is preferred. The arrangement and spacing of plants in the planting bed depends on the growth characteristics of the plant. Space plants so they will uniformly cover an area in a relatively short period of time. To do this, place the plants in staggered rows (not straight lines) in both directions to get faster coverage. Also, if one or two die, it isn't as noticeable.

Plants that spread, such as ice plant and pachysandra, may be spaced further apart than slow-spreading types, such as ajuga and lirioppe. Spacing also depends on funds available and how quickly a complete cover is wanted. Spacings from 6 inches to 2 feet are most frequently used.

"Peat moss is not recommended much anymore because it is not a renewable resource."

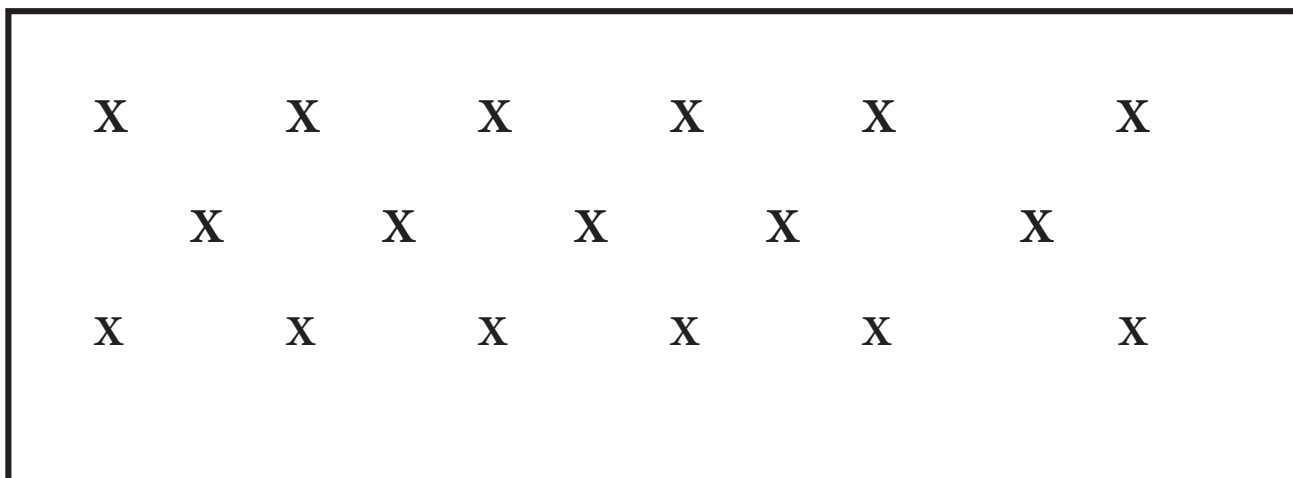
**– Jim Orband, Senior Extension Agent Emeritus
(formerly Unit Coordinator, Extension Agent,
Agricultural and Natural Resources,
Environmental Horticulture, York County)**

The following chart lists the area covered by 100 plants at different planting distances.

Most ground covers do not require significant maintenance; however, during their first years, weeding, mulching, fertilizing, and controlling disease and pests are recommended. When the ground cover is maintained, a good, dense ground cover planting will be your reward.

Planting Distance in Inches	Area Covered in Square Feet
4	11
6	25
8	44
10	70
12	100
18	225
24	400
36	900
48	1600

Reprinted from Virginia Cooperative Extension
Publication Selecting Landscape Plants:
Ground Covers, 426-609



GROUND COVERS FOR GLOUCESTER

The ground covers listed in the following table have proven to be reliably cold hardy and are all successfully grown in Gloucester. While there are at least a dozen different varieties of ground covers that grow in our area, detailed information on those specifically recommended is provided on the following pages.

Caution: Ground covers are used to quickly cover areas; this fact alone makes many of them aggressive and potentially invasive.

Ground Cover	Description	Height/Spread	Exposure/Soil	Uses and Care
Aaronsbeard St. Johnswort <i>Hypericum calycinum</i>	A low-growing deciduous shrub with 3- to 4-inch leaves, medium to dark green, bluish green below. Purplish fall cover. Yellow flowers in the summer	16 inches tall and spreads 18 to 24 inches by underground stems. Fast grower	Best in full sun to part-shade. Prefers acidic, well drained soil. Moderately drought tolerant. Will tolerate less than ideal conditions	Can be used in high foot traffic areas (3 or more times a day) If it becomes unkempt, mowing will rejuvenate its appearance.
Ajuga— Bugleweed— Carpetweed <i>Ajuga reptans</i>	A semi-evergreen dense, mat-forming, stoloniferous ground cover. White or blue flowers bloom in April and May	6 to 10 inches tall; spread is non-stopping and varied	Prefers slightly shaded locations with well-drained soil of a pH of 6.5. Likes moist mulched soil and is not drought tolerant	Excellent spreading ground cover for shaded or moist areas. May be used to fill in beneath foundation shrubs around buildings. Avoid planting near door entrances as it attracts pollinators. Occasionally invasive
Autumn Fern— Japanese Wood Fern <i>Dryopteris erythrosora</i>	A dwarf fern with fronds displaying coppery-red turning to deep green colors	12 to 24 inches tall by 12 to 36 inches wide	Shade to part sun in moist well-drained soil with a pH of acidic to slightly alkaline	Can be grown as a ground cover under trees in the dry shade Deer proof
Barrenwort— Bishop's Hat <i>Epimedium sp.</i>	Many are evergreen ground covers for dry shade which produce inconspicuous sprays of small white, yellow, orange, pink, or lavender flowers in spring.	1 foot tall with a spread of 1 to 3 feet	Woodland setting (dappled shade or morning sun) in moist well-drained soil	Epimedium species should be grown in conditions mimicking their native woodland habitats where they're naturally mulched by fallen leaves.
Bishop's Weed— Goutweed— Snow-on-the-Mountain— <i>Aegopodium podagraria 'Variegatum'</i>	A medium-sized variegated herbaceous perennial ground cover that has an upright mat growth habit. Small white flowers appear in June	10 inches tall and 12 inches wide	Part to full shade in moist but poor to average soil. Leaf scorch will occur if receives too much sun.	Used for edging, border, foundation, raised planter, or focal point ground cover Should be used only in a restricted root zone area because it spreads rapidly by underground invasive stolons.
Catmint <i>Nepeta phyllolochlamys</i>	A mat forming perennial with woolly, silver leaves and delicate pink flowers in summer	4 inches tall with spread of 8 inches	Full sun in average, well-drained soil	A small plant that is great in a container or rock garden Deer proof

GROUND COVERS FOR GLOUCESTER (continued)

Ground Cover	Description	Height/Spread	Exposure/Soil	Uses and Care
<p>Common Periwinkle— Creeping Myrtle <i>Vinca minor</i></p> <p>Big Periwinkle <i>Vinca major</i></p>	<p>An evergreen, prostrate, mat-like ground cover which blooms with white or purple flowers March through May</p>	<p>4 to 6 inches tall; spread is non-stopping and varied.</p> <p>10 to 12 inches tall with an indefinite spread</p>	<p>Prefers sun to shade and a soil of medium drainage and low fertility with a pH range of 4.0 to 7.0.</p>	<p>Excellent, fast-growing ground cover for large sunny areas such as creek or river banks.</p> <p>Both are occasionally invasive.</p>
<p>Coral Bells— Rock Geranium— Alum Root <i>Heuchera sp.</i></p>	<p>A perennial ground cover that comes in a wide array of leaf colors, sizes, and textures. Plants grow in mounds. Blooms in summer with tall flowers spikes. Plants with <i>Heuchera villosa</i> genes tolerate our heat and humidity more easily.</p>	<p>Up to 20 inches tall with a spread of 12 inches</p>	<p>Part shade to full shade in rich, loamy, moist, well-drained soil</p>	<p>Best used as a border plant, specimen, or ground cover</p>
<p>Creeping Dianthus—Pinks <i>Dianthus</i></p>	<p>A low-growing perennial that has silvery foliage and pink, white, red, rose, or lavender flowers that bloom off and on all summer</p>	<p>4 to 30 inches tall and 4 to 18 inches wide</p>	<p>Part to full sun in average, well-drained soil</p>	<p>Good for containers, borders, slopes, and general ground cover</p> <p>Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies and is drought tolerant and deer resistant</p>
<p>Creeping Juniper <i>Juniperus horizontalis</i></p> <p>Blue Rug <i>'Wiltonii'</i></p>	<p>A needled evergreen ground cover that is a vigorous grower capable of covering a large area. The foliage turns a purple or slate color in the winter.</p> <p>Very popular cultivar.</p> <p>Foliage is steel-blue-green in summer, purplish in winter.</p>	<p>Depending on the variety, it grows 3 to 6 inches tall with a spread of 8 to 10 feet.</p> <p>Grows 1 to 3 feet tall and spreads 6 to 10 feet</p>	<p>Prefers full sun and average, medium moisture, well-drained soil. Adaptable to a wide range of soils, but prefers a dry, sandy soil</p>	<p>It tolerates hot, dry situations and is an excellent plant for slopes and banks.</p> <p>Monitor for mites and scale.</p> <p>Helps with erosion Low flat status of growth of 5 inches makes it prone to weed infestation, as not as dense as other varieties.</p>
<p>Creeping Phlox— Moss Pink— Moss Phlox <i>Phlox subulata</i></p>	<p>A low, carpet-like mat-forming evergreen perennial ground cover that blooms with pink, blue, white, or reddish-purple flowers April through June</p>	<p>4 to 6 inches tall; spread is to 24 inches</p>	<p>Prefers sun to shade and well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0 to 8.0. Plants perform best when soil is kept moist.</p>	<p>A good edging plant that is also useful in front of a perennial border or a rock garden. May be used in large plantings along sunny slopes.</p> <p>For more compact growth, shear plants back after flowering. Clumps should be divided every 3 to 4 years.</p>

GROUND COVERS FOR GLOUCESTER (continued)

Ground Cover	Description	Height/Spread	Exposure/Soil	Uses and Care
Creeping Wintergreen <i>Gaultheria procumbens</i>	An evergreen ground cover that has year-round appeal. In spring small pinkish-white bell-shaped flowers are followed by winter-green-scented bright red fruits that persist until spring. Dark green leaves, winter-green-scented, turn burgundy-red in fall	6 inches tall and 3 inches wide	Part to full shade in moist, acidic, well-drained soil	A ground cover for shaded areas Deer resistant
Foamy Bells <i>Heucherella</i>	Heucherella are sometimes called foamy bells because they are a genetic cross between coral bells (Heuchera) and foam flowers (Tiarella). Foamy bells are shade tolerant perennials that bloom in the spring on tall flower stalks and usually have pink or cream colored flowers.	Compact with foliage clumps growing 10 inches tall and wide. Flower stalks can grow 18 inches high.	Part to full shade in well-drained soil	An alternative ground cover, edging plant, shade garden, foliage plant or accent in large containers to brighten shady areas. Deer resistant Foliage is year round
Golden Creeping Speedwell <i>Veronica repens</i> 'Sunshine'	A low-growing perennial with golden leaves that make an attractive spreading cover. Near white flowers bloom in mid spring. Low growing mat	1 to 2 inches tall and spreads moderately at 6 to 10 inches a year	Part shade to part sun. Tolerates most soils, including a dry area with little to no watering after established. Not drought tolerant	Works well in woodland setting around ferns and hostas. Makes a beautiful showing under azaleas and rhododendrons. Good lawn replacement as will hold up to moderate foot traffic (2 to 3 times a day.) Deer and rabbit resistant
Hosta—Plantain Lily <i>Hosta sp.</i>	A perennial whose foliage dies back in winter, leaving the ground exposed. New foliage develops in spring and lasts well into the fall.	Height and width vary widely—less than four inches across and three inches high to more than six feet across and four feet high—depending on the variety.	Prefers partially shaded areas where the soil remains slightly moist	Often used as perennial borders, accent plants, or edgings; their large leaves provide a lush covering for the soil. Deer food
Ice Plant (Hardy) <i>Delosperma</i>	A fast- and low-growing succulent with purple and yellow blooms	2 to 6 inches tall with a spread of 1 to 3 feet	Full sun in average, very well-drained soil	Useful for edging, ground cover, mass plantings, rock garden, wall planting, along paths and slopes. Very prolific plant that spreads rapidly Once established, it is drought resistant

GROUND COVERS FOR GLOUCESTER (continued)

Ground Cover	Description	Height/Spread	Exposure/Soil	Uses and Care
Lamb's Ear <i>Stachys byzantina</i>	A low-growing perennial spreader with very fuzzy, pale, silvery gray-green foliage. Pink flower spikes bloom in late spring/early summer	6 to 8 inches tall with a 12-inch spread	Full sun to part shade in most soils	<p>Often used in children's gardens because of the soft, furry texture of the leaves</p> <p>As a perennial, it disappears in the winter.</p> <p>Can be invasive</p> <p>Deer proof</p>
Lilyturf—Big Blue -Clumping <i>Liriope playphylla</i> (formerly <i>Liriope muscari</i>) Varieties available	An evergreen grass-like mounding ground cover with white or purple flowers which bloom June through September	12 to 18 inches tall with a spread of 12 to 18 inches	Most types do better in part to full shade; sun-tolerant cultivars are available Drought tolerant	<p>Good ground cover under trees and shrubs or in rock gardens. Often used as border plants.</p> <p>Cut back with lawnmower or shears in late winter.</p>
Lilyturf—Spreading <i>Liriope spicata</i>	An evergreen grass-like spreading or creeping ground cover	9 to 16 inches tall with a spread of 1 to 2 feet. An aggressive spreader	Prefers sun to shade and grows in many types of soil. It is heat and drought tolerant	<p>As this is an aggressive spreader, it should not be used in small garden beds as it could choke out other plantings.</p> <p>In larger garden beds and on slopes, it will effectively fill in empty spaces while adding foliage interest.</p>
Miniature Moneywort <i>Lysimachia japonica minutissima</i>	Low and dense growing evergreen that is slow to fill in. Grows about 2 to 4 inches annually. Small star shaped yellow flowers cover in the summer.	Tight and dense to the ground height—1 to 2 inches; this keeps weeds to a minimum. Spreads to 12 inches.	Acceptable of most soils Likes well drained location Part sun to part shade	<p>This variety is not considered invasive.</p> <p>Holds up to high traffic (3 or more times a day).</p> <p>Deer and rabbit resistant</p> <p>Deadheading blooms will encourage a second blooming.</p> <p>Minimal pruning, if any.</p>
Mondo Grass <i>Ophiopogon japonicus</i> 'Nana' variety (Dwarf)	An evergreen stoloniferous matting ground cover. Often confused with <i>Liriope muscari</i> but the leaves of mondo grass are more narrow, the smaller violet/ lavender flowers are hidden by the leaves, the fruits are blue compared to the black fruits of <i>liriope</i> , and mondo grass is less cold hardy. Topped in summer with round balls, deep blue in color	8 to 12 inches tall and wide 3 inches tall. Slow spreading— 2 to 4 inches a year	Needs to be grown in part shade to shady conditions in mildly acidic soil Part to full shade	<p>It is great filler for containers and beds, a useful groundcover, and ideal to use bordering paths, in the front of borders, and in rock gardens.</p> <p>It is drought tolerant. Deer resistant</p> <p>Handles moderate foot traffic (1 to 2 times a day)</p> <p>It makes excellent filler between walkways and stepping stones.</p>

GROUND COVERS FOR GLOUCESTER (*continued*)

Ground Cover	Description	Height/Spread	Exposure/Soil	Uses and Care
Pachysandra— Japanese Spurge <i>Pachysandra terminalis</i>	A slow-growing medium-sized, herbaceous perennial evergreen ground cover that spreads via a combination of its basal shoots and leaning top growth. It has a procumbent mat growth habit. It has insignificant white flowers in early April.	10 inches tall with a spread of 12 to 18 inches	Prefers part to dense shade and moist, fertile, acidic, well-drained soil	Excellent ground cover for, under trees and shrubs or to prevent erosion on slopes. Typical planting will take about three years to fully establish a solid carpet of ground cover; in the interim, a light mulch will retain soil moisture and reduce the invasion of weeds.
Red Creeping Thyme <i>Thymus praecox 'Coccineus'</i>	A flat-growing, fragrant evergreen with bright reddish pin flowers that fade to light pink in the summer. Foliage turns to a bronze as the weather turns cold. Low mat	1 to 2 inches tall with a 6- to 10-inch spread per year	Part to full sun Tolerant of all soil conditions but needs to be well drained	Versatile ground cover on dry slopes, perfect lawn substitute. Good for erosion control.
Sedum—Stonecrop <i>Sedum sp.</i>	A deciduous perennial with thick, fleshy, succulent-like leaves that bloom August through September. Many different varieties	Wide range of shapes and sizes with upright (2-foot shrubby mounds) as well as low ground cover varieties	Full sun to light shade in average to poor but well-drained soil	Useful in perennial and rock gardens. Cut back dead stalks in spring. Divide sedum every 3-4 years to maintain its compact growth. Drought-tolerant, rabbit and deer resistant, and salt tolerant. Handles moderate foot traffic (1 or 2 times a day).
Shore Juniper <i>Juniperus conferta</i> <i>Pacific Blue Cultivar</i>	Blue-green needle shaped foliage and trailing branches. Dull green in winter	18 inches tall with a spread of up to 8 feet	Full sun, well drained soil. Tolerates sandy soils and salt exposure (seaside environments or road salt)	Excellent spreading cover Useful in mass planters and on slopes. Branches will cascade
Snow-in-Summer <i>Cerastium tomentosum</i>	A herbaceous perennial that has woolly, silvery foliage with small white flowers that bloom in late spring/early summer	6 to 12 inches tall with a spread of 9 to 12 inches	Full sun in average soil	Suitable for a rock garden or border. Trim back foliage after flowers bloom to encourage further flowering. Can be invasive

GROUND COVERS FOR GLOUCESTER (continued)

Ground Cover	Description	Height/Spread	Exposure/Soil	Uses and Care
Willowleaf Cotoneaster <i>Cotoneaster salicifolius</i> Low growing evergreen varieties: <i>Scarlet Leader</i> <i>Autumn fire</i> <i>Repens</i>	Evergreen to semi-evergreen. The wrinkled, dark green leaves are long and narrow on arching branches. Leaves turn purplish in the winter. Two-inch clusters of fragrant white flowers appear in June; bright red fruit in fall and into winter.	2 feet tall with a spread of 8 feet 6 to 12 inches tall with a spread of 4 to 6 feet 2 feet tall with a spread of 6 feet 1 foot tall with a spread of 8 feet	Full sun to light sun Prefers fertile light textured soil, but generally tolerant of poor soil and drought conditions	Excellent spreading ground cover. Moderate growth rate for mass plantings Especially attractive trailing over retaining walls or large groupings on a bank. Minimal pruning necessary except for shaping. Great for sloped sites or difficult areas to mow. Drought tolerant Fast grower
Yellow Alyssum <i>Aurinia saxatilis</i>	A perennial that has a trailing habit and puts out yellow flowers in April-May	12 inches tall and 18 inches wide	Full sun in well-drained poor soil	Excellent in borders, disturbed areas, and rock gardens. Re-seeds itself to form a dense mat Drought-tolerant After the blooms fade, cut back by 1/3 to promote re-blooming.
Yucca <i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	A broadleaf evergreen. As a rugged plant often used as an accent plant in modern ground plantings. Tall stems bear cream flowers in early summer.	4 to 8 feet tall with leaves rising in a rosette fashion in a 2 to 3 foot spread	Full sun in average soil	Well suited for hot, dry conditions

In addition to the ground covers listed in this table, you might consider ornamental grasses. See the chapter on Perennials to learn more about ornamental grasses that can be used as ground covers.

Ground Covers That Are Deemed Invasive

Here today, gone tomorrow. Some ground covers that we typically see throughout Gloucester have now been deemed to be highly to moderately invasive, and homeowners are urged not to plant them. The fact is that you may have certain areas in your yard that you want these ground covers because of their

appearance and hardiness. The decision is yours; just be aware that they can overtake other plants that you want to thrive and they can be difficult to eradicate. The following plants are the ones to think twice about:

- Crown Vetch *Coronilla varia* (occasionally)
- Bittersweet (American) *Celastrus scandens* and (Oriental) *Celastrus orbiculatus* (highly)
- English Ivy *Hedera helix* (moderately)
- Japanese honeysuckle *Lonicera japonica* (highly)
- Lilyturf Spreading *Liriope spicata* (highly)

- Moneywort (Creeping Jenny) *Lysimachia nummularia* (moderately)
- Morning Glory (Ivy-leaved) *Ipomea hederacea* and Morning Glory (Common) *Ipomoea purpurea* (moderately)
- Wintercreeper *Euonymus fortunei* (moderately)

"Ice plant works well in dry, sunny areas."
 – Mary Simpson, GEMG Emeritus

"I love ice plant—a succulent. I started with a small pot and now have large patches of this wonderful plant. It is chartreuse green so it looks great against orange or dark red. It stays low to the ground and adds a coolness to the landscape."
 – Betty Durette, GEMG

"Periwinkle has covered my bank and is going down the hillside."
 –Joy Long, GEMG

VINES

Vines are climbing or trailing plants that add interest to any garden landscape. Generally, they grow rapidly and are relatively drought resistant. They provide spectacular visual effects while taking up a modest spot in the ground. There are annual, evergreen, deciduous perennial, and herbaceous perennials vines.

Functions and Locations of Vines

Vines may be used as barriers or dividers. They can provide privacy for a deck, patio, or porch or they can screen unsightly views. On steep banks or in other areas where it is difficult to establish grass, vines may be used as ground covers. In addition, they can be grown on trellises against homes and other buildings to provide shade, thus improving energy efficiency for cooling. All vines need a structure—tree, pole, trellis, wall, fence, or similar tall object—to climb. They can also be grown where other plants would not have enough room to survive.

"Collect long pieces of driftwood and stand them in the ground; then plant with climbing vines and they make attractive outdoor art."
 – Maxine Slone, GEMG Emeritus

Selection of Vines

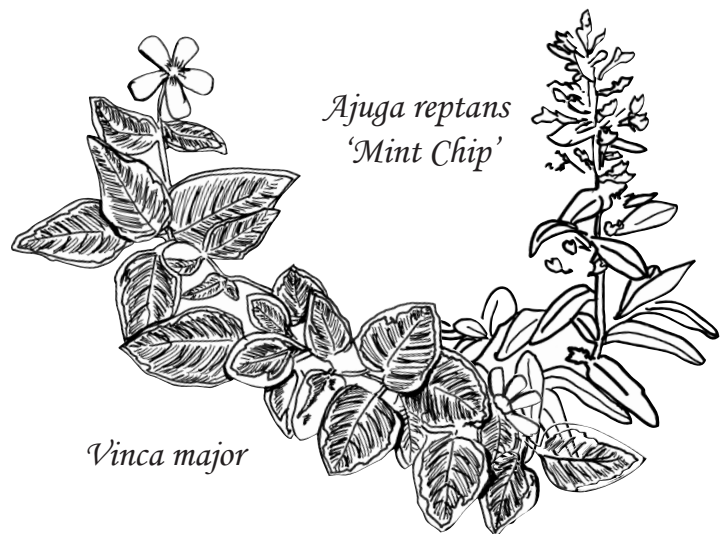
The support required of a vine is a primary consideration in selecting a vine. Some vines, such as the wisteria and moonflower, are very heavy and require a tall sturdy structure. In addition, how the vine climbs dictates the type of support. Vines are divided into three groups according to the way they climb.

1. Attach small, root-like appendages or modified tendrils with circular discs at the tips to a wall or other structure—Boston Ivy—or attach small rootlets along the stem to attach to brick or wood—Virginia Creeper
2. Wind tendrils or leaf-like appendages which act as tendrils around a support—clematis and grapevines
3. Climb by twining—Carolina yellow jasmine and wisteria. Twining climbers often need some guidance when young to direct their growth.

By knowing how the vine climbs, you can provide the proper support.

"Vinca major is sold locally and looks like periwinkle (Vinca minor) with larger leaves. It likes shade or part shade. Once planted, it will take over as it is extremely aggressive."
 – Susan Malcom, GEMG Emeritus

"Be careful in planting houttuynia; it has 10 to 12 inch roots, and spreads everywhere, plus it does not have a pleasant odor."
 – Noel Priseler, GEMG Emeritus



VINES FOR GLOUCESTER

Vine	Description	Length	Exposure/Soil	Support and Care
Black-eyed Susan Vine <i>Thunbergia alata</i>	A fast-growing annual vine that displays flowers in shades of red, orange, and yellow with and without dark eyes. Blooms in summer	6 to 8 feet	Sun to part shade in average soil	Climbs by twining around a trellis or other support and is excellent in mixed containers or hanging baskets
Boston Ivy <i>Parthenocissus tricuspidata</i>	A fast-growing, close-clinging vine that has inconspicuous flowers that attract bees and bluish-black berries in grape-like clusters	10 to 50 feet	Full sun to part shade in many soil types	Climbs by root-like appendages. Use to quickly cover supports or structures. Can cause structural damage
Carolina Yellow Jasmine <i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	A fast-growing vine with reddish, wiry, twining stems. In late winter blooms with masses of fragrant, funnel-shaped golden flowers.	10 to 20 feet	Blooms best in full sun but can grow in part shade. Tolerates slightly acidic and slightly alkaline soils	Climbs by twining around fences, porches, and trellises. All parts of the plant are poisonous.
Clematis Jackman's Clematis <i>Clematis x Jackmani</i> Sweet Autumn Clematis <i>Clematis ternifolia</i>	<p>A fast-growing hybrid with beautiful flowers 4 to 7 inches across in pink to purple, crimson, lilac, sky blue, and more colors</p> <p>A vigorous perennial vine that has fragrant, small white blossoms in late summer/early fall</p>	<p>8 to 20 feet</p> <p>20 to 30 feet</p>	<p>Vine blooms best in full sun; however, keep root system cool with mulch or shaded in some manner. Plant in good, moist but well-drained soil.</p> <p>Sun to partial shade</p>	<p>Climbs by twining stems and leaf petioles. Train on a support or trellis.</p> <p>Depending on cultivar, flowers May through October on new growth.</p> <p>Will take over support frame and even reach for nearby trees. Prune hard in early spring. Can be invasive</p>
Climbing Hydrangea <i>Hydrangea anomala petiolaris</i>	A showy landscape plant with flat-topped flower clusters in the summer. Can also be useful as a ground cover.	30 to 40 feet	<p>Full sun to medium shade in average soil</p> <p>Blooms prefer sunny location.</p> <p>Performs well in most soils, but does like it well drained</p> <p>It does best if the soil is slightly acid to alkaline (pH 5.5 to 7.0)</p>	<p>Climbs by twining. Slow to establish but, once established, grows rapidly and forms a dense mat of flowers and foliage.</p> <p>Support should be sturdy. Can also ramble along the garden floor as a ground cover</p>
Coral Honeysuckle <i>Lonicera x heckrottii 'Gold-flame'</i>	A fast-spreading perennial that bears fragrant, carmine flowers that bloom from late spring to fall and are followed by red berry-like fruits	10 to 20 feet	Blooms best in full sun in soils with pH of 6.0 to 8.0	Climbs by twining around fences, porches, and trellises
Hyacinth Bean <i>Lablab purpureus</i>	A fast-growing vine grown as an annual in Gloucester. Bears purple flowers in mid to late summer	6 to 15 feet	Full sun in average soil	Climbs by twining Seeds are poisonous if ingested. Self seeds

VINES FOR GLOUCESTER (continued)

Vine	Description	Length	Exposure/Soil	Support and Care
Moonvine— Moonflower <i>Ipomoea alba</i>	A fast-growing vine grown as an annual in Gloucester. It bears large, very fragrant white flowers that open toward evening and remain so until about noon on the following day.	10 to 20 feet	Full sun in average soil	Climbs by twining. Becomes heavy so provide good support.
Purple Passionflower— Maypop— Apricot Fruit <i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	A fast growing vine grown as an annual in Gloucester. In mid and late summer, it bears complex white and purple/blue flowers that many think represent events about the crucifixion of Christ.	15 to 20 feet	Full sun to light shade in well-drained average to poor soil	Excellent climbing a fence or on a trellis Although attractive to bees and butterflies, parts of this plant are poisonous if ingested. Can be invasive
Sweet Potato Vine <i>Ipomoea batatas</i>	Chartreuse green, black, and tricolor. A fast growing annual vine that thrives in hot conditions. No flowers	3 to 4 feet spread	Full to partial sun in average soil	Excellent in containers and thrives throughout summer and into fall
Wisteria Japanese Wisteria <i>Wisteria floribunda</i>	This fast-growing vine develops a woody trunk and bright green leaves with 9- to 20- inch drooping clusters of fragrant, bluish-violet, pink, or white flowers.	30 feet or more	Blooms best in full sun but can grow in part shade. Plant in moist, well-drained loam.	Climbs by twining. Slow to become established and may require several years to reach blooming stage. More cold hardy than Chinese wisteria and less invasive. Requires a strong support Don't plant near windows, doors, gutters, or a live tree as it can invade openings and kill trees. All parts of the plants are poisonous. Considered occasionally invasive
American Wisteria <i>Wisteria frutescens</i>	A high-climbing, fast-growing wisteria that is not as vigorous or dramatic as the Japanese Wisteria. Its lilac/purple flowers appear June through August.	30 feet or more	Full sun in well-drained soil	Requires less pruning than Japanese Wisteria and is less aggressive. It is easier to control than the Asian wisterias as it does not send out long root suckers.
Virginia Creeper— Woodbine <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	A native, deciduous vine with a loose, open growth pattern. Leaves change colors with the seasons.	30 to 50 feet	Sun or shade in many types of soil	Climbs by branched tendrils that often terminate into flattened pads. Is very drought-resistant. Presents an interesting pattern on blank walls, rustic structures and rocky banks. Can be invasive

Vines That Are Deemed Invasive

Like ground covers, there are some vines, such as Kudzu vine, that are considered highly to moderately invasive and require caution when considering their use. These are the following:

- Chinese Wisteria *Wisteria sinensis* (highly)
- English Ivy *Hedera helix* (moderately)
- Japanese Honeysuckle *Lonicera japonica* (highly)
- Trumpet Vine *Campsis radicans* (highly)

“Coral honeysuckle will grow 5-6 feet high in full sun but must be tied to a support (fence, post, or chicken wire around a post). Keep it trimmed for constant bloom from early spring to late fall and sometimes through winter. It’s lovely in flower arrangements; cut when one of the blossoms in a cluster has opened and condition it in warm water before using.”

– Jan Price, GEMG

“Native Virginia clematis makes a nice arbor plant. Don’t plant trumpet vine. It’s invasive.”

– Mary Simpson, GEMG Emeritus

REFERENCES

- Department of Conservation & Recreation. (2010). *Invasive alien plant species of Virginia*. Retrieved from: http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/documents/invlist.pdf
- Heriteau, J. (1997). *Virginia gardener’s guide: The what, where, when, why, & how of gardening in Virginia*. Franklin, TN: Cool Springs Press.
- Hillman, A. (2005). Ornamental vines. *The Master Gardeners*. Retrieved from: <http://emmitsburg.net/gardens/articles/adams/audrey/vines.htm>
- Lindsey, S. (2005). Vines: The gymnasts of the garden. *The Master Gardeners*. Retrieved from: <http://www.emmitsburg.net/gardens/articles/adams/2005/vines.htm>.
- Orband, J. (2000). *Common plants of the Peninsula*. Yorktown, VA: Virginia Cooperative Extension.
- Relf, D., & Appleton, B. (July, 1994a). Selecting ornamental vines. *The Virginia Gardener Newsletter*, (8)7.
- Relf, D. (1997b). *Ornamental perennial vines*. Retrieved from: <http://ext.vt.edu/departments/envirohort/articles2/perenvin.html>
- Relf, D. (2009c). Woody plants: Selection, use, and care. In Relf, D. (Ed.), *Master gardener handbook: A guide to gardening in Virginia*. (pp. 370-71, 429-36). Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.
- This publication can be found at <https://Resources.ext.vt.edu> or <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu>. (Type in the publication number [e.g. 456-018] in the search box.)

Selecting landscape plants: Ground covers, 426-609 (Hort -31P) (2012)p

