

# THE ROSEDALE PLANTSMAN'S GUIDE TO PLANTING AND GROWING HERBACEOUS EVERGREEN GROUNDCOVERS



## HERBACEOUS EVERGREEN GROUNDCOVERS:

Herbaceous Evergreen Groundcovers are non-woody plants (such as low vines) that grow naturally in close proximity. These groundcovers generally are planted in lieu of grass where a thick, richly textured “living carpet” is desired for landscape purposes, or a shaded location or steep slope makes a lawn difficult to maintain. The principal Evergreen Groundcovers that Rosedale recommends for these areas include: Pachysandra or Japanese Spurge (*Pachysandra terminalis*), Hardy Myrtle (*Vinca minor*), Purpleleaf Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei* ‘*Colorata*’), and English and Baltic Ivy (*Hedera helix* and *H. h.* ‘*Baltica*). Because groundcover plants grow closely together, they help exclude weed and other plants through competition, but also require good soil preparation, adequate water, and annual fertilizing for best results.

## SITE CONDITIONS:

In general, the Groundcovers recommended for specific site conditions and purposes are as follows:

Pachysandra (6-8” H; glossy, medium green foliage; small white flowers). Best for lightly to densely shaded locations with reasonably deep soils. Excellent for foundation plantings and a frequent choice for traditional-style homes. Pachysandra does not establish as well as Ivy or Wintercreeper in areas with thin, rocky soils or where there are many surface-rooted trees.

Hardy Myrtle (4-6” H; small, blue-green oval leaves; attractive lavender flowers). Best in sun to moderate shade with reasonably deep soils. Does not become quite as dense a Groundcover as Pachysandra. Attractive in both formal and woodland areas for its fine texture, glossy deep green leaves, and flowers.

Purpleleaf Wintercreeper (3-5” H; 1-1-1/2” blue-green oval leaves). Best in sun to moderate shade in all soils. Provides the best coverage on steep slopes and in work areas. Particularly effective for contemporary houses. Blue-green foliage turns purple in fall/winter. Note: Purpleleaf Wintercreeper is eaten by deer and rabbits.

English/Baltic Ivy (Trailing Vines; green to dark-green leaves). Large-leaved English Ivy grows best in light to heavy shade. Baltic Ivy will tolerate full sun. Both are good in all soil, but may be eaten by deer in areas with active deer populations. Particularly effective where a larger leaf texture is desired, or to cover locations with rocky soils or surface-roots. Both varieties can cling to and climb tree trunks, masonry walls and stones.

## PLANTING GUIDE:

<b>Recommended # for Planting</b>	<b># Plants/Flat (except as noted)</b>	<b># Plants Needed per 100 SF</b>
Pachysandra 4-7/ SF	100 rooted cuttings	400-700
Hardy Myrtle 3-4/SF	24 clumps (flat)	300-400
1/SF	1-gallon pots	100
Purpleleaf Wintercreeper 2-3/SF	100 rooted cuttings	200-300
English/Baltic Ivy 1-2/SF	48 rooted cuttings/flat	100-200
English/Baltic Ivy 1-2/SF	24 rooted cuttings/half flat	100-200

## PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Clear the location of weeds and rocks. Loosen soil thoroughly to a depth of 5-7" using a handfork or rototiller. Rake even.
2. Spread on groundcover bed a layer of Peat Moss or Compost approximately 1" thick (4 cf Peat Moss bale covers approx. 80 sf) and Planting Fertilizer (4-10-6) as described on bag instructions.
3. Thoroughly mix Peat Moss or Compost and fertilizer into soil.
4. Gently pull rooted cuttings or clumps from flats as needed. Make holes for planting by digging narrow, 3-4" deep holes with trowel. Place plants in holes, spread root systems in natural manner, replace soil, and firmly tamp with hands.
5. Use groundcover spacing recommended above. Increase quantity per square foot quantity if thicker groundcover is desired immediately.
6. Mulch groundcover bed with 2" layer of Pine Bark or other natural mulch. For best results on steep slopes, use Cypress Bark Mulch, since individual pieces tend to hold together and resist washing away better than other mulches.
7. Water gently but thoroughly for good soaking.
8. Continue watering as above twice per week for first 3 weeks, then reduce water to 1-2 times per week until established (3-4 months).

**MAINTENANCE:**

Weed the bed every 3-4 weeks during the growing season or as needed. Note: Avoid stepping on all groundcovers, as they are tender plants and damage easily. Water during prolonged dry periods or on unusually hot days as needed. Provide top dressing of mulch in fall to maintain 2" deep layer. Discontinue weeding (except where needed) and mulching after plants have closed spaces to form solid groundcover.

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

Peat Moss or Compost  
Pine Bark or other organic mulch  
Planting Fertilizer (4-10-6)  
Garden Hose

## Helpful Tools

Shovel  
Handfork  
Lawn Rake  
Trowel

**REFERENCES:**

*All About Groundcovers* (Books)  
*Groundcover and Vines* (Brooklyn Botanic Garden)