

ORNAMENTAL PLANTS

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Ornamental plants are the primary tool in developing functional and beautiful home grounds; the knowledge of plants, their demands, and their proper usage is seldom understood by the homeowner.

Every plant in the landscape should satisfy a definite landscape need; otherwise, it becomes an added expense, a space taker, or a liability rather than an asset to the homeowner. To achieve full use of a plant in the landscape, the user must know the plant he chooses - its growth requirements and its abilities to satisfy the need for which it is intended.

The following list of plants are broken down into basic or general usage areas with basic growth demands, plant characteristics and sizes, and values and drawbacks. Common names and scientific names are listed. The scientific name should be used when possible because many plants have various common names. Quite often two plants may have the same common name. This plant listing is by no means inclusive.

Ground Covers - Surface plants to cover ground area usually maintained at a height less than 18 inches. Ground cover plants should be vigorous, dense foliage and a spreading habit so as to adequately cover soil areas. Ground covers should be evergreen and winter hardy and may be a vine or low shrub. Ground covers are often used in tight leftover areas so as to reduce lawn maintenance in such areas. Plant selections for ground covers should require little or no maintenance.

- a. English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) - Best in shade - fast growing - evergreen dense vine - propagated from runners or cuttings - likes moisture - harmless to trees - other varieties with varying size and color of leaf.
- b. Ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*) - Shade or partial sun - one to three inches high - fast growth - evergreen - likes loamy, well-drained soil - spikes of blue flowers in spring - good for rock gardens and small areas - green, bronze, or purple variegated varieties - will overcrowd itself and is susceptible to crown rot and southern wilt; thus, it is recommended for small areas.

- c. Confederate or Star Jasmine (Trachelospermum jasminoides) - Fast growing, evergreen, twining vine - sun or shade.
- d. Dwarf Junipers - Numerous varieties - juniperus procumbens and Juniperus horizontalis "Bar Harbor" good examples - blue-green evergreen foliage, dense growth, demands sun and well-drained soil - good for rock gardens - susceptible to red spider and bagworm.
- e. Trailing Lantana (Lantana sellowiana) and other varieties - tolerates poor soil - prefers sun - semievergreen - abundant lavender blooms all summer - trailing type.
- f. Liriope (Liriope muscari) - sun or shade - spike type foliage on plants which clump - lavender-blue spike flowers in summer - several varieties with Liriope majestic having a double bloom and a variegated variety.
- g. Monkey Grass or Mondo Grass (Ophiopogon, Mondo japonicum) - Sun or shade - very hardy - easy culture.
- h. Plumbago (Plumbago capensis) - Best in sun or semishade - not winter hardy but returns in spring - blue flowers all summer into fall - a shrub standing three feet high with a vining character - easy culture.
- i. Strawberry Begonia (Saxifrage decipiens) - Shade or filtered sun - hugs ground - spreads by runners - likes moisture - tends to die back if exposed to too much summer heat - good in rock gardens - rose colored foliage in winter - recommended for small areas.
- j. Cast Iron plants (Aspidistra) - Rugged-sun or shade - prefers shade - stands two feet high - large coarse textured leaves - evergreen but dies back with severe cold to return in spring - variegated variety.
- k. Japanese Purple Honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica chinensis) - Sun or partial shade - shrub with vining characteristics - dense evergreen - rugged - honeysuckle blooms in late spring or early summer - purple foliage in fall and winter - fast growing.
- l. Vinca Periwinkle (Vinca major) - Shade or partial sun - fast growing, evergreen, twining vine - blue flowers in late spring - mounds up to 18 inches - recommended for large areas, ditch banks, rock gardens, etc. - also variegated variety.

- m. Verbena (Species) - Demands sun and good drainage - vivid blooms; various colors depending on variety - not completely winter hardy - susceptible to red spider, leaf miner, and aphids.
- n. Silvermound (Senecio) - Sun - mounds of fine, textured silver or green depending on variety - small heads of yellow blooms in mid to late summer - may be damaged by cold but returns in spring - fast growth.
- o. Dusty Miller (Senecio cineraria) - Full sun - grows to 30 inches - summer flowering - attractive silver-gray foliage - may be damaged by cold but returns in spring - fast growth.
- p. Moss Phlox (Phlox subulata) - Low massive evergreen which creeps across ground surface providing vivid pink blooms in early spring - evergreen - sun or partial shade - fast growth - recommended for rock gardens, bed borders, and small areas.
- q. Festuca - Rounded mounds of silver-gray grass - demands sun and well-drained soils - evergreen - fast growth - good for rock gardens or interplanted in a rock ground cover.
- r. Winter Creeper or Creeping Euonymus (Euonymus fortunei and varieties) - Evergreen creeping character - rather sparse, thus does not provide a solid cover and will often appear messy and unkept.
- s. Daylilies (Hemerocallis) - Sun or semishade - form dense clumps which provide rich summer blooms - easy culture numerous varieties - fast growth - susceptible to aphids.