

Groundcovers for Western Washington

Any plant that is relatively low growing and spreading in habit may be used as a groundcover. Groundcover plantings help protect the soil from erosion, and, when well established, can inhibit the growth of weeds.

Turfgrass has been the groundcover of choice for generations, and under the right conditions of adequate sunlight and summer rainfall (or irrigation), there are few other plants that can cover soil and withstand hard use like it can. Unfortunately, many garden or landscape areas planted with lawn grasses present serious maintenance problems. Good turf is difficult to establish and maintain on banks or sloped areas and in shaded locations under trees. Long, narrow areas of turfgrass are very difficult to irrigate without wasting water. Of course, another thing that must be considered is the availability and cost of water for summer turf irrigation. Most groundcover plants are not precise substitutes for turfgrasses, but if lawn areas are being replaced, there are many plants that may be used instead. Also, since some groundcover species and their varieties possess the virtue of drought tolerance once they are established, few, if any, summer irrigation should be required.

The following list presents some groundcovers suitable for use in western Washington. It is by no means an exhaustive list. Effort was made to include mostly evergreen materials for obvious reasons, so many deciduous plants were omitted. For descriptions and cultural requirements of the listed plants, it is suggested that a good plant encyclopedia and manual, such as the *Sunset Western Garden Book* be consulted.

Scientific Name	Common Name
Achillea tomentosa	Woody Yarrow (may be mowed)
Ajuga reptans	Carpet Bugle
Arctostaphylos media	Media Manzanita
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi and varieties	Bearberry, Kinnikinnick
Calluna vulgaris	Scotch Heather (low, spreading types)
Ceanothus gloriosus	Point Reyes
Ceanothus prostratus	Mahala Mats, Squaw Carpet
Ceratostigma plumbaginoides	Dwarf Plumbago
Chamaemelum nobile	Chamomile (may be mowed)
Cornus canadensis	Bunchberry
Cotoneaster dammeri	Bearberry Cotoneaster
Cotula squalida	Brass Buttons
Cystisus kewensis	Kew Broom
Dryas octopetala	Mountain Avens
Duchesnea indica	Indian Mock Strawberry
Epimedium species	Epimediums

Erica carnea
Erica ciliaris
Fragaria chiloensis
Galium odoratum
Gaultheria shallon
Genista pilosa
Hypericum calycinum
Juniperus rigida conferta
Juniperus horizontalis and varieties
Linnaea borealis
Liriope spicata
Lithodora diffusa
Lysimachia nummularia
Mahonia nervosa
Mahonia repens
Muehlenbeckia axillaris
Pachysandra terminalis
Potentilla cinerea
Potentilla tabernaemontanii
Rubus calycioides
Sarcococca hookeriana humilis
Thymus pseudolanuginosus
Thymus serpyllum
Vaccinium vitis-idaea
Vancouveria hexandra
Vinca major
Vinca minor
Waldsteinia fragaroides

Winter Heath, Spring Heath
Dorset Heath
Beach Strawberry
Sweet Woodruff
Salal
Creeping Broom
Aaron's Beard, Creeping St. Johnswort
Shore Juniper
Carpet Juniper
Twinflower
Creeping Lily Turf
Lithodora
Creeping Jenny, Moneywort
Longleaf Mahonia
Creeping Mahonia
Creeping Wire Vine
Japanese Spurge
Cinquefoil
Spring Cinquefoil
Creeping Bramble
Creeping Sarcococca
Woolly Thyme
Wild Thyme
Cowberry, Foxberry
Inside-out Flower
Periwinkle
Dwarf Periwinkle
Barren Strawberry

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