

	Blue Wood Sedge <i>Carex flaccosperma</i>	Leadwort <i>Ceratostigma plumbaginoides</i>	Liriope <i>Liriope spicata</i>	Lady's Mantle <i>Alchemilla mollis</i>	Coral Bells <i>Heuchera americana</i> 'Chocolate Veil'
HABIT	Clump forming 6-12 inches high	Mat forming 8-12 inches high	Clump forming 8-12 inches high	Clump forming 12-18 inches high	Clump forming 18-24 inches high
ZONE	Zones 5-8	Zones 5-9	Zones 4-10	Zones 4-7	Zones 4-9
ORIGIN	North America	Asia	Asia	Asia	North America
AESTHETICS	Blue-green wide bladed grass-like foliage. Interesting slender seed heads form in the spring.	Lime-green foliage with tinges of red. Clear blue star-shaped flowers with red seedheads, summer to fall.	Dark green grass-like evergreen foliage, summer flower spikes in shades from light purple to violet.	Large round light green-gray leaves sparkle when holding moisture droplets. Sprays of small yellow-green flowers.	Deep maroon foliage, small delicate pink flowers on tall flower spikes.
CULTURE	Partial shade to shade. Benefits from cutting back in late winter.	Full sun to partial shade. Grows best in dry soils. Vigorous grower, may spread in garden bed.	Full sun to partial shade. Can benefit from spring shearing if foliage becomes winter damaged.	Full sun to partial shade. Likes moist soil.	Full sun to partial shade. Evergreen in mild winters. Prune out damaged foliage in spring.



Getting plants established

Once established, these plants are tough and weed suppressive, but need some care when you put them in the ground.

To ensure good establishment

START CLEAN Plant only on a site that is free of weeds. If there are perennial weeds with fleshy roots, take time to completely kill or remove them before going any further. These plants can suppress weeds that germinate from seeds, but may not be able to compete with weeds sprouting from root pieces.

ADD COMPOST To loosen a heavy soil or help a sandy soil hold onto water and nutrients, till in organic matter—compost is best.

MULCH About 3 inches of shredded bark mulch works wonders to keep weeds out while plants are young. Find mulch at your garden center.

WATER Soak well at planting and keep soil moist until they're established.

HAND WEED Keep the weeds out while groundcovers are filling in! Don't expect them to work miracles—your plants need to become well established before they can stand up to weeds. Plan to hand weed once or twice during the first year. Once established, your plants should require little weeding.

Maintenance

The groundcovers that have late season flowers like autumn goldenrod will benefit from a late fall, winter or early spring shearing to remove the spent seed head and damaged foliage.

To discourage weed encroachment, apply mulch to plot margins.

Brochure design, some photos:
Christine Sevilla, *lumin guild*

Test bed on Interstate 490, Rochester, NY
Plants on highway median thrived despite sustained drought conditions during the summer of 2007.



Weed-suppressive Groundcovers

For further information and resources visit:
http://nysipm.cornell.edu/nursery_ghouse/weed_supp_grcovrs.asp

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What's in a name? A *groundcover* is a perennial plant used *en masse* for its visual wallop and to crowd out weeds. Many are gorgeous perennials that gardeners have used in flower borders for years. Now we're finding that some are top performers in the "tough sites" department too. Fewer weeds means less herbicide use. Good news for you ... and for the environment.

The plants listed here have been evaluated under different growing conditions for their ease of establishment, low maintenance characteristics and their ability to exclude weeds. Our initial screening tests took place in Ithaca (Finger Lakes region, zone 5) and Riverhead (eastern Long Island, zone 7), New York. Since then demonstration plots have been established across New York State. This brochure summarizes the growth characteristics for top rated groundcovers. All of these plants will perform well in full sun, and some are shade tolerant as well. If you are interested in native plants look for those that originate in North America. Nursery retailers can mark the plants in this guide that are available and suited to local conditions.



	Moss Phlox <i>Phlox subulata</i> 'Emerald Blue'	Butterfly Milkweed <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Catmint <i>Nepeta x faassenii</i> 'Walker's Low'	Autumn Goldenrod <i>Solidago sphecelata</i> 'Golden Fleece'	Salvia <i>Salvia nemorosa</i> / <i>S. sylvestris</i> 'Blue Hill'	Little Bluestem <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> 'The Blues'	Northern Dropseed <i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	White Heath Aster <i>Aster ericoides</i> 'Snow Flurry'	Two-row Stonecrop <i>Sedum spurium</i> 'John Creech'
HABIT	Mat forming 4-6 inches high	Sprawling 12-24 inches high	Upright and sprawling 18-24 inches high	Upright 18 inches high	Clump forming 18-24 inches high	Clump forming 20-40 inches high	Clump forming 24-48 inches high	Low, dense mound 3-6 inches high	Creeping 3-6 inches high
ZONE	Zones 3-9	Zones 3-9	Zones 3-8	Zones 2-8	Zones 4-8	Zones 5-9	Zones 3-9	Zones 3-9	Zones 3-8
ORIGIN	North America	North America	Eurasia, Africa	North America	Europe	North America	North America	North America	Asia
AESTHETICS	Profusion of early spring blue blooms, glossy evergreen foliage.	Dark green foliage. Bright orange flowers in summer are very attractive to butterflies. Interesting upright seed pods late in the season.	Green-grey foliage. Long lasting blue flowers in spring/ summer.	Broad dark green foliage with late summer display of yellow blooms.	Blue flowers late spring through early fall attractive to pollinators and hummingbirds.	Tall, slender blue-green leaves turn to golden bronze in fall. Looks best planted in large groups. Free to bend and sway, provides a prairie look.	Graceful fine textured grass. In late summer tall lightly fragrant flowers/ seed heads are produced. Foliage fades golden to bronze in fall/ winter.	Mounding dark green foliage covered with white flowers in September.	Low growing with small, fleshy, evergreen leaves and pink flowers in late summer and early fall.
CULTURE	Full sun. Tolerates drought and even a little salt. Grows best in well drained soil.	Full sun. Drought tolerant. Prune back spent stems in late winter or spring. New foliage emerges later than most perennials.	Full sun. Vigorous grower, allow room so it doesn't crowd out neighboring plants.	Full sun. Removing spent flower stalks in the spring gives the plant a more refined look.	Full sun. Cut back after first bloom to encourage vigorous re-bloom.	Full sun. Remove last year's foliage by cutting to ground in late winter/ early spring.	Full sun. Drought tolerant. Grows best in well drained soils.	Full sun to partial shade. Drought tolerant.	Full sun to partial shade. Grows best in dry soils.

