

	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.

*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\\_grcovs.asp](http://nysipm.cornell.edu/nursery_ghouse/weed_supp_grcovs.asp)

Content contributors, including photos, from Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension:

Brian Eshenaur  
NYS Integrated Pest Management Program  
Rochester NY

Andy Senesac  
Long Island Horticultural Research & Extension Center  
Riverhead NY

Irene Tsontakis-Bradley  
Long Island Horticultural Research & Extension Center  
Riverhead NY

with Leslie Weston  
Environmental Landscape Design and Management  
Trumansburg, NY

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

Printed by Monroe Litho- a Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified printer using 100% renewable, non-polluting wind power. Paper is FSC certified and contains over 50% recycled wood fiber.

*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.



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