



## Cottage Garden Services The Specialist in Organic Gardening

### “Useful Tips for Your Garden” - Fact Sheet n. 2

#### **- Ground Covering Plants -**

Using ground covering plants in the garden can give many advantages; in fact, once established, they will suppress weed growth, as well as providing an attractive carpet of colour.

They can also be under-planted with shrubs and trees for an impressive garden display.

Ground covering plants come in a very wide variety and can be utilised in groups: some may grow higher than a ground-hugging carpet, others may spread vigorously and cover larger areas.

It is important when laying out a ground-covering scheme to choose the most suitable type of plant for your garden. For best and quicker results, however, a single type used in large quantities is recommended.

Good soil preparation is also very important. Preferably, the soil needs to be thoroughly dug to a depth of 9in before planting. Adding plenty of organic material, such as garden compost, well rotten farmyard manure, etc. is imperative. This will ensure strong growth during the first season.

A good example of utilisation of ground covering plants is on a bank, usually very difficult to maintain. To achieve successful results, it may be necessary to dig holes at regular intervals, adding compost and finally inserting the plants in the holes. Once they are established, their roots will consolidate the soil against erosion.

Ground covering plants are very easy to maintain: a general fertiliser applied to the soil when it warms up in the spring will be enough to build up the roots, allowing the plant to become a large clump. The flowering performance will also benefit. The secret of success is ensuring that, especially the newly planted plants are well watered from the start, to help them establish quicker.

“Cottage Garden Services” suggest planting in the autumn, when the soil is still warm, and the plants will benefit from the winter rainfalls, keeping the maintenance level very low until the following season.

Here is a list of the most popular and easy to maintain ground covering plants to choose from :

AJUGA Family: ‘Burgundy Glow’ - Multicoloured foliage with blue flowers

BERGENIA Family: ‘Cordifolia’ - Crinkled leaves with mauve/cherise flowers

DIGITALIS Family: ‘Excelsior Hybrids’ - Mixed shades of white/cream/purple

GERANIUM Family (Perennial type): ‘Wargrave Pink’ - With salmon pink flowers; ‘Johnsons Blue’ - with cup shaped Lavender blue flowers

LAMIUM Family: ‘Maculatum’ - Variegated foliage with lilac flowers

SISYRINCHIUM Family: ‘Striatum’ - Grey/green leaves with yellow flowers

STACHYS Family: ‘Silver Carpet’ - Woolly foliage with pinkish flowers

TELLIMA Family (Evergreen): ‘Grandiflora’ - Medium sized green leaves with creamy white flower bells

See our fact sheet n. 1 for details about Hostas (the most versatile ground covering plant)

**Other Fact Sheets are available for: 1 – Hostas; 3 – Garden Maintenance; 4 – Organic Gardening & Compost Heap; 5 – The Wildlife Garden**