
Ground Cover Spacing Guide

For a ground cover to cover an area quickly and with little weed invasion, you need to install enough plants to allow the ground cover to fill in area during the first year. Each ground cover listed in this guide has a number listed after it's description which tells you how far apart to plant your ground cover sprigs. Then, use the chart below to determine how many flats of ground cover to purchase at your local nursery based on the area you need to plant. (this guide assumes that each flat contains 64 rooted sprigs per flat)

Ground Cover Spacing	6"	12"	18"	24"
Flats to buy per 1,000 sq. ft.	64	16	7	4

South Bay Botanic Garden

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Reasons to Plant Ground Covers

Conserves water

Prevents weeds

Reduces erosion potential

Grows in areas where lawns fail

Modifies micro-climate temperatures

Reduces dust

Beauty, flowers, fragrance

Less maintenance once established

Soil Preparation for Ground Covers

When preparing a new area for the planting of a ground cover, remember that the ground cover will likely perform well for you for at least 10 years. Therefore, proper soil preparation is critical. Attempt to turn over or rototill the soil to at least 6" deep and add a quality soil amendment such as peat moss or compost. Thoroughly mix in this amendment. In addition, a plant food of approximately 10-10-10 should be added at the rate of 5 lbs per 1,000 square feet of area or 1/2 lb per 100 square feet of area. Once the plants are installed, water in the area thoroughly without flooding or run-off.



Ground Cover Guide



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Ground Covers of the South Bay Botanic Garden

1. *Zoysia tenuifolia* - Korean grass

Creeping, fine textured, bumpy grass. Grows 3" to 6" high and does not need mowing. Makes a beautiful grassy meadow or gives mossy Oriental effect in areas impossible to mow. The farther inland, the longer the dormant season.

2. *Dymondia margaretae* – Dymondia

Dymondia is a ground-hugging South African perennial. It is an ideal plant between stepping stones and paving blocks because it forms such a tight mat. Once it grows together into a carpet like this weeds can't compete with it. The leaves are gray-green on top and a felt-textured white underneath. Dymondia's only fault that it spreads slowly.

3. *Armeria maritima* - Sea Pink

Sea pinks form low 6" - 12" mounds of thick grass-like foliage with white to pink rounded flowers atop thin stems. Plant sea pinks in average to loamy, loose, well-drained soil in full sun to part sun. Sea pinks are a nice border or rock garden plant. As their common name suggests they are somewhat salt tolerant.

4. *Campanula poscharskyana* - Serbian Bellflower

Serbian bellflowers have an easy, undemanding habit. Creating a stream of lavender blue, the 1-inch-diameter star-shaped blossoms bloom reliably from late spring to early fall. The foliage remains evergreen in mild winters and needs to be sheared only once in a while to keep its appearance tidy. 'Blue Waterfall' flows beautifully along bed edges and through rock gardens in full sun to partial shade. Noteworthy characteristics: Long bloom period. Low maintenance.

5. *Myoporum parvifolium* - Prostrate Myoporum

Prostrate Myoporum has bright green, narrow leaves, evenly spaced in spirals around horizontally spreading stems. A profusion of small white flowers appear in the spring and continue throughout the summer. It is a tough ground cover plant, extremely popular here in the low desert. Prostrate Myoporum will grow to less than a foot and spreads to 6 feet wide. Several plants may be grouped to create a continuous ground cover. Mass plantings on slopes are used to control erosion.

6. *Delospermum* 'Pink' - Pink Disneyland Iceplant

Pink Disneyland Ice Plant is a rapid spreading plant in which on sprig can cover a 2' circle in the first year. It has bright pink blossoms and can bloom heavy enough in the spring to cover most of the plant. This ice plant stays relatively low to the ground and is best in full sun.

7. *Ophiopogon japonicus* 'Nana' - Dwarf Mondo Grass

Mondo Grass is native to Korea and Japan. It has a fairly low growing habit of about 3" tall. The flowers are hidden and insignificant, thus the plant is grown for its foliage and ground-cover effect. It makes an excellent filler between walkways and stepping stones. Dwarf Mondo Grass needs to be grown in partial shade to shady conditions.

8. *Thymus lanuginosus* - Woolly Thyme

A fine low maintenance variety with tiny felted gray leaves; it rarely flowers. Looks good all season and is a favorite between flagstones or mixed into a thyme lawn to contrast with green-leaved varieties. Evergreen foliage.

9. *Erigeron karvinskianus* - Daisy fleabane

This is a trailing groundcover that is beautiful cascading over walls or pots. It spreads 3-5 feet wide and grows 1-2 feet tall. The small white daisies with a touch of pink bloom almost year-round. It looks its best in a cool spot with sun to light shade. It can be invasive with moderate water, but it will take poor soil and drought and performs best if cut down periodically. It prefers a coastal climate and the interior heat of summer does make it shut down.

10. *Wedelia trilobata* - Wedelia

Wedelia is native to the northern part of South America and the West Indies. It is a creeping evergreen perennial that roots at the leaf nodes and spreads widely. The flower is a yellow daisy-like flower that is approximately 1 inch across. The plant makes an excellent groundcover as well as a great hanging basket. Grow in full sun to part shade.

11. *Gazania* Hybrids - Clumping Gazania

Clumping Gazanias are great plants for smaller areas in full sun. Their daisy-like blooms only open in the sun and come in a huge variety of colors. Since they don't spread much, plant them 6" apart in smaller areas of your garden. For larger areas, use the Trailing Gazania listed below.

12. *Drosanthemum floribundum* - Pink Ice Plant

This hardy perennial produces dazzling metallic purple flowers in spring each year. It is a low-growing, ground-hugging plant with small, stubby, light green, succulent leaves. It makes an ideal plant for water-wise gardeners, particularly those living in climates with hot dry summers. The flowers usually open about midday and close in the evenings. On dull, cool days they remain closed.

13. *Lampranthus aureus* - Orange Bush Ice Plant

Orange Bush Ice Plant is a clumping ground cover with brilliant orange flowers. Plant these in smaller areas and in full sun. Good between stones or to fill out small bare areas. Shear off dead blooms after the flowers are spent.

14. *Aptenia cordifolia* - Red Apple

These succulents originated in arid regions of South Africa. They are characterized by heart or lance-shaped leaves and flowers that form in singles or threes. Great for hanging pots, rock gardens, and slopes. Requires very little watering. Full sun and fast draining soil provides best growth results.

15. *Gazania rigens leucolaena* - Trailing Gazania

Trailing Gazanias are better for larger areas in full sun. They typically have silvery-green foliage and yellow daisy-like flowers. Plant these about 12" apart for a full cover in the first year.

16. *Lampranthus spectabilis* - Pink Ice Plant

Sprawling or trailing to 1 ft. high, 1 1/2 to 2 ft. wide. Three-sided gray-green leaves. Planting becomes a carpet of gleaming color from late winter to spring, when the 2 1/2" wide, pink, rose pink, red, or purple flowers are in bloom.

17. *Senecio mandraliscae* - Blue Finger

Spreading succulent from South Africa that grows to 12 to 18 inches tall with 3 to 4 inch long blue gray pencil-like fleshy leaves and small dull white flowers in mid-summer. Forms a dense mat with leaves angled upward from the ground. Drought tolerant but tolerates regular irrigation. Plant in full sun to light shade. Hardy to around 15° F.

18. *Festuca ovina* 'glauca' - Blue fescue

Grows in grassy, tuft-like clumps. 6-10" high with spectacular, non-fading blue foliage. Ideal for borders and rock gardens and small areas where you would like to draw special attention. It does well in full sun and poor, fairly dry soil. Quite suitable for seashore planting. Plant 6" apart for tight clump pattern and then mulch tightly to eliminate weeds.

19. *Thymus serpyllum* 'Elfin' - Elfin Thyme

Low growing, dense, mounding herbaceous perennial or subshrub. Leaves are a medium green to grayish blue, lightly hairy, 1/8 to 3/8 inches long. Small, summer borne flowers are highly attractive to bees. Excellent for rock gardens and around stepping stones. Native to Europe

20. *Hedera helix* 'Hahn's' - Hahn's English Ivy

Fast growing English Ivy. Light green, pointed leaves. Middle leaf lobe is much longer than sides. Tolerates shade or sun. Climbs well. Plant 1 to 3 feet apart.

21. *Thymus serpyllum* 'Doone's Valley' - Doone's Valley Thyme

This low spreading, evergreen Thyme has a lot to offer: golden variegated foliage, colorful flowers, and a tangy lemon aroma. Brimming with tiny pinkish purple blooms, the 3 to 4 in. long, flowering clusters enhance the gilt-edged, deep green leaves in the cool of spring.

22. *Hedera helix* 'Needlepoint' - Needlepoint English Ivy

Hedera helix 'Needlepoint' features green pointed lobes with an elongated central lobe. It is primarily grown as a trailing ground cover lawn alternative. Also popular as a climbing vine and for topiaries. Fast growth rate, infrequent foot traffic is tolerated. Tolerates shade.

23. *Lantana montevidensis* - Trailing Lantana

Trailing Lantana grows 18-24 in high with vine-like stems that can sprawl to 5 ft or longer to form wide-ranging clumps. Leaves are about 1" long and have an aromatic odor when crushed. Weeping lantana is a continuous bloomer in frostfree areas producing quantities of small lilac flowers that are arranged in flowerhead clusters that are 1" across.