GROUNDCOVERS FOR UTAH LANDSCAPES
Classifying Groundcovers

- Groundcover designation is based on opinion but they usually are aggressive plants less than 12 inches in height that form solid mats of vegetation.
Classifying Groundcovers

- Groundcovers are:
  - Annual or perennial
  - Deciduous or evergreen
  - Herbaceous or woody
Weed Control

Weeds ruin more groundcover plantings than anything else.
Do not plant in soils infested with perennial weeds.
Use mulches, herbicides, cultivation etc. to keep weeds out.
Improve the soil

Using soil amendments is one of the best ways to create successful groundcover plantings. Avoid heavy clay soil that discourages plant growth.
Choose plants that are adapted to our area

Many beautiful groundcovers will not survive our harsh, cold winters or hot, dry summers.
Provide the correct cultural conditions

Each groundcover has certain requirements for soil, sun, water, and maintenance. If these are not met the groundcover will not grow well.
Water newly planted groundcovers as needed

Even native, drought tolerant, groundcovers require supplemental water for several years to spread and fill in to prevent unwanted weeds.
There are many other suitable groundcovers for our conditions. Check local sources for many different plants.
Aaron's Beard
Hypericum calycinum

- Grows to 12 inches
- Very vigorous
- Green leaves
- Yellow flowers
- Partial shade
Barren Strawberry
Waldsteinia fragarioides

- Grows to 8 inches
- Green leaves
- White flowers
- Shade/partial shade
Photo courtesy Thomas G. Barnes @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database
Bearberry

*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*

- Grows to 6 inches
- Utah native plant; Use peat moss as a soil amendment
- Dark green leaves
- Inconspicuous pink flowers
- Sun or partial shade
Bearberry Cotoneaster
*Cotoneaster dammeri*

- Grows to 24 inches
- Low growing shrub
- Green leaves
- Inconspicuous pink flower
- Sun or partial shade
Bishop's Weed
*Aegopodium podagraria variegatum*

- Grows to 14 inches
- Extremely vigorous in any soil may become weedy
- Light green edging, white leaves
- No showy flowers
- Browns out in hot, sunny areas
Prostrate Junipers
*Juniperus* species

- Grows to 12 inches
- Many groundcover junipers available
- Green leaves
- No showy flowers
- Sunny dry areas
Bugle Weed
Ajuga reptans rubra

- Grows to 4 inches
- Selected varieties available
- Purple or green leaves
- Blue flowers
- Sun or partial shade
Cranberry Cotoneaster
*Cotoneaster apiculatus*

- Grows to 36 inches
- Persistent red berries; attractive to birdlife
- Green leaves
- Inconspicuous pink flowers
- Sun or partial shade
Creeping Oregon Grape
*Mahonia repens*

- Grows to 12 inches
- Utah native plant
- Green leaves
- Yellow flowers
- Shade or partial shade
Creeping Speedwell
Veronica prostrata

- Grows to 6 inches
- Spring flowers
- Green leaves
- Blue flowers
- Sun or partial shade
Dragon's Blood
*Sedum spurium*

- Grows to 4 inches
- Many varieties available
- Green to red leaves
- Pink flowers
- Sun and shade
Dusty Miller
*Chrysanthemum ptarmiciflorum*

- Grows to 8 inches
- May die out in cold winters
- Silver-White leaves
- Yellow flowers
- Sun
English Ivy
*Hedera helix* (many varieties)

- Grows to 4 inches
- May be hard to establish; needs rich, moist soil
- Dark green leaves
- No showy flowers
- Shade or partial shade
Flowering Strawberry

Fragaria 'Pink Panda'

Full sun/light shade
Height 6 in.
Moderate water
Other cultivars with white flowers
Germander
*Teucrium chamaedrys prostratum*

- Grows to 8 inches
- Resembles dwarf boxwood; good for edging
- Green leaves
- Red-purple flowers
- Sun
Houttuynia cordata 'Chameleon'

- Grows to 12 inches
- Multicolored groundcover with spreading rhizomes
- Green, pink and yellow foliage
- Insignificant flowers
- Sun/partial shade
Sedum

*Sedum* (many species and varieties)

- Grows to 5 inches
- Green leaves
- Yellow flowers in early summer
- Sun
Japanese Honeysuckle
*Lonicera japonica*

- Grows to 24 inches
- Tolerates poor drainage and drought; potential climber
- Green leaves
- White flowers
- Sun
Lamb's Ear
*Stachys byzantina*

- Grows to 6 inches
- Small, purple flowers stand eight inches above foliage
- Gray leaves
- All areas
Spotted Dead Nettle
*Lamium maculatum*

- Grows to 6 inches
- Needs moist, well drained soil
- Silver, white and green foliage
- Pink, white or lavender flowers
- Shade/partial shade
Dead Nettle

*Lamium*

- Grows to 6 inches
- Tolerates dry soil
- Variegated green leaves
- Yellow flowers
- Shade/partial shade
Leadwort
*Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*

- Grows to 18 inches
- Green leaves
- Blue flowers in August
- Sun or partial shade
Lily-of-the-Valley
*Convallaria majalis*

- Grows to 8 inches
- Very simple culture; needs fertilization
- Green leaves
- White flowers
- Shade
Moneywort
(Creeping Jennie)
*Lysimachia nummularia aurea*

- Grows to 3 inches
- Green leaves
- Yellow flowers all summer; potential houseplant
- Sun
Groundcover Roses

*Rosa species*

- Grows to 24 inches
- Use for large hillsides or out of the way places
- Green leaves
- Many flower colors
- Sun
Moss Pink

*Phlox subulata*

- Grows to 6 inches
- Mat forming perennial; many varieties available
- Green leaves
- Pink, blue, white flowers
- Sun
Mother of Thyme
*Thymus praecox*

- Grows to 2 inches
- Used in rock crevices and between stones in walks
- Gray-Green leaves
- Blue, pink or white flowers
- Sun
Ornamental Strawberry *Fragaria chiloensis*

- Grows to 8 inches
- Cross of strawberry and potentilla
- Glossy green leaves
- Pink or White flowers
- Sun / Partial shade
Oregon Grape

*Mahonia aquifolium*

- Grows to 36 inches
- Needs protection from drying winds
- Glossy green leaves
- Yellow flowers
- Shade or partial shade
Periwinkle
*Vinca minor*

- Grows to 12 inches
- Possibly best Utah groundcover
- Dark green leaves
- Blue flowers
- Shade or partial shade
Periwinkle
Vinca major

• Grows to 18 inches
• Rapid grower
• Dark green leaves
• Blue flowers
• All areas
Polygonum cuspidatum
(var. compactum)

- Grows to 36 inches
- Red stems; may become weedy
- Green leaves
- Pink flowers
- All areas
Prostrate Cinquefoil

- *Potentilla tabernaemontani* (verna)
- Grows to 6 inches
- Vigorous; flowers all summer
- Green leaves
- Yellow flowers
- Sun
Rock Cotoneaster
*Cotoneaster horizontalis perpusillus*

- Grows to 24 inches
- Attractive pink flowers
- Green leaves
- Sun or partial shade
Scotch & Irish Moss
*Selaginella kraussiana*

- Grows to 3 inches
- Needs adequate moisture
- Green leaves
- No showy flowers
- Shade
Silver Nettle Vine
*Lamiastrum galeobdolon variegatum*

- Grows to 12 inches
- Can be used indoors in a hanging basket
- Light green leaves
- Yellow flowers
- Shade or partial shade
Snow-In-Summer
*Cerastium tomentosum*

- Grows to 8 inches
- Drought tolerant; extremely tough and vigorous
- Gray-green leaves
- White flowers
- Sun
Sun Rose

*Helianthemum nummularium*

- Grows to 18 inches
- Several varieties available
- Gray to Green leaves
- Pink, yellow, white, red flowers
- Sun
Sweet Woodruff
*Galium odoratum* (asperula)

- Grows to 8 inches
- Pleasant fragrance
- Dark green leaves
- White flowers
- Partial shade
Violets
Viola sp.

- Grows to 4 inches
- Thrive best in moist, rich soils
- Green leaves
- Purple flowers
- Shade or partial shade
Wild Ginger
Asarum canadense

• Grows to 4 inches
• Attractive, green, kidney-shaped leaves; requires moist, rich soil
• Reddish-brown flowers
• Deep shade
Wintercreeper
Euonymus fortunei

- Grows to 18 inches
- Shrub like growth; large leaves
- Green leaves
- No showy flowers
- Shade or partial shade
Woolly Thyme
*Thymus pseudolanuginosus*

- Grows to 2 inches
- Use in crevices for an attractive but not extensive ground cover
- Gray leaves
- Small purple flowers
- Sun