

Sechelt Garden Club

Oct 30, 2023 meeting

The Complete Talk on Ground Covers

Plants that reduce maintenance, control erosion, improve the environment, and beautify the landscape

by Gary Lewis

Ground covers are widely thought of as utilitarian, but these plants also offer a diverse range of beautiful and intriguing options with a variety of colours, textures, and forms. They can unify a landscape, knit together plantings and hardscape, and add extra layers of beauty, dynamism, and surprise. As a replacement for lawns, they can reduce our use of water, fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, carbon-based fuels, and transform a yard into a diverse landscape of habitat and food for native insects, birds, and other wildlife.

Gary spent 9 years researching his book. Research shows ground covers are a lot more amazing than previously thought. They can meet the needs of many gardeners....they can speak to the moment we are at in our gardens.



Ajuga

GROUND COVER TYPES

- **Rhizomatous**
- **Suckering and Stoloniferous**
- **Trailing**
- **Self seeding**

Rhizomatous ground covers have underground stems that send out roots and stems from its nodes. These vertical stems can form a thicket.

Suckering ground covers such as Sweetbox are like rhizomatous ground covers in that the growth forms from the main stems.

Runner/Stoloniferous form a horizontal branch from the base of a plant that produces new plants from buds at its tip or nodes. Examples of this type of ground cover are strawberries and ajuga.

Trailing/Creeping ground covers form above ground stems that root...such as vinca, thyme and sedum.

Another option is using vines as a ground cover. Many vines are ground covers until they find something to climb. Examples would be clematis or hydrangeas....these choices are good for large or sloping areas.

One more option is to plant varieties of plants that are more wide than tall.....if planted at the right distance apart or in mass planting they will become a ground cover.

Self-seeding plants such as Mexican fleabane can grow in cracks and crevices....and can self-seed into spaces between plants.

BENEFITS OF GROUND COVERS

- Functional and Economic
- Outcompetes weeds
- Reduces lawn surface area
- Protects tree roots – many varieties grow well in deep shade and in challenging soil ph
- Reduces erosion and will slow stormwater runoff

Environmental

Lawns are considered green deserts for wildlife, are excellent habitats for chafer beetles and require a lot of inputs.

Ground covers are excellent lawn replacements....which save time, money and water.

Reduce pesticide and herbicide use

Create a great habitat and increase diversity of invertebrates and soil fungi....which in turn create a healthier garden

Capture and compost plant debris

Reduce evaporation and maintain soil moisture

Maintain organic matter

Great alternatives to hardscape

Enhance H₂O infiltration by increasing groundwater replenishment

Reduce urban heat island effects

Reduce noise pollution

Aesthetic

Groundcovers can soften or connect hardscape

Can provide opportunities to add diversity to your garden

Can be used twice....both in new or existing gardens by being used for a large covering or in between larger plants

They add finishing touches

Provide many different shapes.....flat, mounds, clumps, upward thickets, undulating mounds

Growth types will interact differently....rhizomatous will stop at the edge or trailing will provide cover

They can be foliage only or flowering and fruiting

Enhance Garden Styles

Ground cover can provide transition from lawn to larger perennials

Cover bare soil

Delineate spaces

Direct garden traffic

Connect garden areas

Soften the edges of hardscapes

Can influence and enhance the visual experience in your garden

Guide the physical movement through the garden

Emphasize garden features and accentuate featured plantings

Can create living walls and enliven tight spaces

And above all.....replace lawns

Use in Combinations

Use the same species but different cultivars

Use different genera and contrasting plants

Contrast in color, shapes, texture, where the combination can change through the year

Use mounding and spreading species



Arctostaphylos

Community Projects update

The Community Projects group has been busy with several projects. We got together and made Garden Club Aprons to identify ourselves when we're out in public, gardening. Look for us in our lime green or turquoise aprons.

You may wonder what gardening we could be doing in November...a number of the black planters on Cowrie and Wharf Streets have been vandalized, so we've been replanting those and tweaking the others.

We also have plans to plant another Butterflyway garden at Kinnikinnick Elementary School, hopefully this Fall so the plants can get established before our dry season begins again.

If you're interested in taking part in any of these projects, contact Marg or Pat.

Sechelt Garden Club Needs YOU

We urgently need a TREASURER for 2024.

Anyone interested in any other positions on the executive is welcome

Please contact

Gerri Randall at 604-813-4171 or

Lee Tidmarsh at 604-374-4255

Membership renewal

It is time to renew your membership for 2024. Fees remain the same at \$25 for a single member and \$40 for a family. Please pay on-line to muguettem@shaw.ca. When prompted for a security question as 'what is this for' Answer is 'membership'

Cash or cheque also accepted. Make cheque to 'Sechelt Garden Club' and Mail to Sechelt Garden Club PO Box 1492 Sechelt BC V0N 3A0

Go Native!

Evergreen Huckleberry

Vaccinium ovatum



Evergreen huckleberry is a handsome BC native shrub that has small ovate glossy foliage. The foliage is tinted with red when young, maturing to dark green. Flowers are white-pink and bell-shaped in the spring followed by small purplish-black berries in the fall.

Evergreen huckleberry grows slowly to 2 m high and 1.5 m wide, it grows higher in the shade, up to 4 m. It is drought tolerant, fire smart and pollinator friendly. It prefers dry or occasionally moist conditions.

In the landscape; Evergreen Huckleberry is very versatile. It will form an attractive hedge given time but does not transplant well.

www.nativeplantspnw.com

www.bcinvasives.ca



We are going to the VanDusen Festival of Lights again on Wednesday Dec. 6 at 4:30 Book tickets on line for that time and join the SGC group. Cost is \$16.50 for seniors or \$24 for adults

Take the 1:05 ferry and return at 7:50. Parking is free at the gardens. Call Gerri Randall 604-813-4171 if you need to car pool or if you have spaces.

'Ask it Basket'

A new feature at our meetings is a question period about gardening for members. Please write your question and put it in the 'Ask it basket'. We will provide an answer from our experienced and knowledgeable membership

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Up Coming meeting

Nov 27 7:00 Seaside Centre Annual General Meeting and election of new executive, followed by Angela Koop from Deluxe Garden Centre who will demonstrate wreath making