

GROUNDCOVERS for your GARDEN



An information guide from
STILL CREEK LANDCARE



What are Groundcovers?

Groundcovers are plants that grow up to 60cm tall. They include broadleaf plants (sometimes called forbs), ferns and grasses. They play a valuable role in the garden and can look great!

Why use Groundcovers?

Groundcovers can reduce mowing and weeding and are better for the environment. Bare soil between garden shrubs gets hot in summer, cold in winter, dries out the soil, erodes in heavy rain and invites weeds, rabbits and bandicoots.

Groundcovers as Mulch:

Mulch can be used to protect bare soil and avoid these problems. Pebbles, woodchip and straw-based mulches are often used as a mulch. Pebbles get contaminated with soil and plant material and need occasional cleaning. Organic mulches break down and need continual replacement.

As an alternative “Green mulches” are selected groundcovers that protect the soil like other mulches, but can add a whole new dimension to your garden. Your garden will look more natural, rain water will enter the soil readily and there will be good protection for soil organisms.



Kidney weed (Dichondra repens) used as a lawn substitute in a light traffic area

Groundcovers have other uses:

- On banks and slopes, they stabilise the soil, preventing erosion by wind and water. They look nice if allowed to spill over rocks, retaining walls or logs. Prune to keep them clear of paths and steps.
 - Reduce lawn mowing by substituting low groundcovers in light traffic areas. They look pleasing when combined with pavers.
 - An area of unmown native grass will provide seed for small birds and protection for frogs. They will reduce insect damage. Unmown grass might look odd at first, but is becoming a popular garden feature.
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Selection of Groundcovers

Landcare encourages you to choose native plants for your garden. There is an ever-increasing range of appealing native groundcovers at retail nurseries. Here are some suggestions:

- *Brachycomes* and *Scaevolas* are long flowering low-growing plants, excellent for edges of paths and general infill.



Brachycome



Scaevola

- Various forms of *Juncas* and *Lomandra* are clumping plants with round or strappy leaves that look good as mass plantings, especially around ponds.
- *Grevillea* "Poorinda Royal Mantle", *Grevillea* "Austraflora Fanfare" and the spreading forms of *Hardenbergia violacea* are carpeting groundcovers that will spill down banks and over walls.
- Native ferns such as Maiden Hair, Rasp fern (*Doodia aspera*) and Sickle fern (*Pelleae falcata*) can grow in moist shade, providing a rain forest feel to a corner of your garden.



Maiden Hair Fern



Rasp Fern (Doodia aspera)

- Grasses such as Microlaena, Wallaby and Kangaroo grass, if left unmown, will provide seed for small birds and cover for frogs. Microlaena is the shortest and will look best in a small garden.



Unmown native grass (Microlaena) used as a garden feature

Would you like to know more about groundcovers?

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