

THE GOLD MEDAL PLANT PROGRAM

Growing a greener Long Island since 1999



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Gold Medal Ground Covers

In a tight spot and don't know what to plant? Try one of these award-winning ground covers! Ground covers are a great way to fill in bare spots and add a unique touch to your landscape, while suppressing weeds. These winning ground covers have desirable foliage and/or flowers and grow admirably in the Long Island garden. Plant one today!



Ceratostigma plumbaginoides - **Plumbago**

Carefree, long-flowering ground cover - Gold Medal Winner 2002

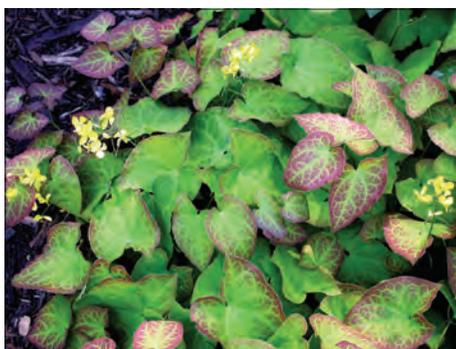


Plumbago or Blue Leadwort is a durable, deciduous ground cover for an edge or front of border plant. Bright green foliage emerges late and can prevent weed growth. Deep gentian blue flowers appear in August or September. Foliage turns brilliant red bronze in late September and persists through November. Cut it back hard at end of season. Grow in sun or part sun locations in well-drained soil high in organic matter. Since it is late emerging, interplant with early flowering bulbs for best results. It grows 8-12" tall with a 12-18" spread and is hardy in zones 5-10.

Epimedium x perralchicum 'Fröhnleiten' - **Fröhnleiten Barrenwort**

Evergreen ground cover for dry shade - Gold Medal Winner 2001

This Barrenwort is a sturdy, quick establishing, low maintenance ground cover for the shade. It performs well in moist, organic soils and even in difficult to handle, dry shade locations. For fast coverage, plant 3" potted plants 6" to 8" apart. Plants spaced 12" apart will fill in more slowly as the plants produce runners. Cut back in the spring; use a lawnmower in large areas. Bright yellow flowers appear soon after, then the fresh green foliage with a red edge resumes growth and remains evergreen throughout the year. Hardy in zones 5-9.



Microbiota decussata - **Russian Arborvitae**

Attractive, evergreen ground cover - Gold Medal Winner 2000

Russian Arborvitae is an evergreen ground cover that makes an interesting replacement for junipers. The pleasing green color changes in fall to bronzy-purple. It will perform nicely in moist, well-drained soils to dry conditions in part shade to full sun locations. The prostrate growth will attain a height of about 12-16" and will grow horizontally (8-12" annually) to reach a spread of 12'. Also works nicely in a raised planter where it can weep over the sides. There are no known pests and diseases that bother microbiota that are normally associated with other coniferous ground-covers (such as tip blight and related problems). Hardy in zones 3-8.



Sarcococca hookeriana var. *humilis* - **Dwarf Sweetbox**
Fragrant, evergreen, woodland ground cover - Gold Medal Winner 2004



Dwarf Sweetbox has attractive dark green evergreen foliage that hides the highly fragrant white February-March flowers. This woodland ground cover, to about 24" in height and width, spreads slowly to form nice drifts for foreground in moist, acid soils in shade, semi-shade areas; works well with rhododendrons. It is best to mulch new plantings. It looks good all year and is highly pest resistant. Hardy in zones 6 to 8.

***Waldsteinia ternata* - Siberian Barren-strawberry**
Tough, deer-resistant ground cover - Gold Medal Winner 2005

Siberian Barren-strawberry is a tough, vigorous, mat forming semi-evergreen ground cover. Low growing 4" to 5" high with shiny strawberry plant-like foliage and 1/2" wide saucer-shaped bright yellow flowers that appear in late spring through early summer. Thrives in humus-rich acidic soil and tolerates part and full shade and does well in full sun with adequate moisture. This ground cover is drought tolerant and effectively competes with weeds once established. Works well as a lawn alternative or ground cover in a natural garden and is deer resistant. Hardy in zones 4 to 7.



Some more great ground covers include:

- *Geranium x cantabrigiense* 'Biokovo' - Hardy Geranium
Low-maintenance, attractive ground cover - Gold Medal Winner 2008
- *Phlox stolonifera* - Creeping Phlox
Flowering ground cover for moist shade - Gold Medal Winner 2009
- *Stachys* 'Helene von Stein' - Helene von Stein Lamb's Ears
Silver-leafed, perennial ground cover - Gold Medal Winner 2006

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The Long Island Gold Medal Plant Program began in 1999 and is administered by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County. The purpose of the Gold Medal Program is to identify underutilized plant material of exceptional merit that is particularly suited for growing on Long Island. Increased public education and awareness of sustainable plant selections is the main goal of the Program.

Four award-winning plants are selected each year, which may be trees, shrubs, perennials, vines, groundcovers, or grasses. Visit www.ccesuffolk.org to see descriptions of all the award-winning plants. Gold Medal Plant Winners are identified by the Plant Selection Committee, which is a volunteer group of horticulture professionals. If you would like more information, please contact Darrell Trout at: dtrout11@verizon.net

*This publication was created by Alexis Alvey, Nursery & Landscape Specialist
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*Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County provides equal program and employment opportunities.
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