

Beauty and Practicality

Bring Variety To Your Garden: Grow Attractive Ground Cover

For variety in your garden or around the yard, as well as protection of the soil, you might consider growing ground cover.

Pleasing visually, ground covers also offer such practical functions as:

- Covering bare areas of ground.
- Preventing soil erosion.
- Regulating foot traffic in the yard or garden when used as edging for pathways.
- Connecting unrelated shrubs and flowerbeds in the landscape.

Ground covers range in size from plants as short as grass to shrubs 3 feet high. Creeping and dwarf lilyturf cover the ground like grass, while cotoneaster and juniper depend on the matting of stems and leaves or the interlocking of branches to cover the ground.

Ground cover also allows you time on the golf course, since the plants usually maintain themselves with a minimum of care once they become established.

MICHIGAN HAS PERFECT CLIMATE

Michigan's climate is particularly well suited to ground cover plants. The thick, spreading growth of ground covers help delay the alternate freezing and thawing of the soil, helping the plants to grow.

Fertilizing, mulching, weeding, and watering are the main requirements of ground cover care.

Fertilize the plants in winter and again in the early spring.

Ground covers are slower than grass in covering bare ground. Consequently weeds might be a problem, especially in the first year.

A mulch of wood chips, straw, or other organic refuse will control most weeds, as well as retain moisture in the soil.

Be careful not to dig around the plants as it might break the roots and could promote germination of weed seeds.

WATER REGULARLY

Water your plants regularly and allow the water to penetrate deeply into the soil, but don't water so heavily that the soil becomes soggy. Even winter watering will help when the weather is dry and the temperature is above freezing.

A winter with very little snow could be harmful to your plantings. With no snow covering, direct sunlight might cause permanent damage as a result of plant tissues thawing.

To protect the plants lay conifer branches or burlap over the beds. If the plants heave out the soil in cold weather, push them back immediately. Don't wait until spring.



Attractive and practical ground cover can be a decorative addition to your garden.

Quick Tips On Spring Lawn Care To Ready Your Lawn For Summer

SPRING CARE

Proper spring lawn care is important in establishing an actively growing turf or adequate quality for the upcoming growing season.

The lawn should be raked prior to active spring growth and the first mowing to remove dead grass, leaves, twigs and other debris. It is particularly important to remove stones, wire and similar objects which can damage mowing equipment and be potentially injurious to people if thrown by a rotary mower.

By adjusting the cutting unit down to one inch for the initial mowing only, much of the dead leaf and stem debris will be cut off and can be removed. This close mowing stimulates earlier spring greenup, but must be done prior to the initiation of spring growth in order to avoid injury to the new shoot growth.

Rolling is a practice which is sometimes required on lawns to smooth uneven areas caused by the heaving action of winter freezing and thawing, insects, earthworms, or traffic.

Basically a compaction action, rolling should be practiced only when necessary. The preferred time to roll is very early spring, just after the surface soil zone has thawed.

Other spring lawn care practices to be completed following raking and rolling include thatch control and fertilization. If de-thatching is neces-

sary, it should also be accomplished in early spring.



Spring . . . and as soon as the last frost has passed, time for gardening.

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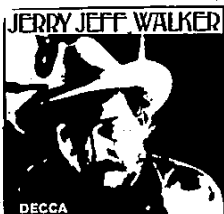
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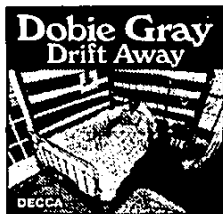
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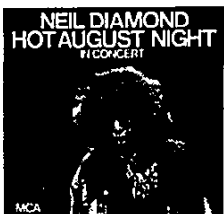
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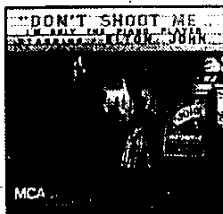
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