



How to Create “Green Mulch” in Your Yard

Creating a tightly knit carpet of native vegetation to suppress weeds and retain moisture is an eco-smart technique to replace traditional wood mulch. While a light layer of traditional mulch may be needed in the earlier years of establishment, with time, low-growing vegetation will fill in and weave its way around shrubs, trees, and taller forbs and grasses.

Groundcovers can spread by above-ground stolons, below-ground rhizomes, as well as natural reseeding/self-sowing.

To encourage these processes, it's important to keep the wood mulch layer light so that soil contact can be made by seeds and stolons.

Give your green mulch tapestry a boost by supplementing with landscape plugs. Of course, establishing primarily with closely placed landscape plugs 5 to 10 inches apart will help this beautiful living, functional tapestry establish even faster.

Some favorite groundcovers (select plants that work with your landscape's soil type, sun exposure, and moisture requirements)

- Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*): rhizome
- Canada Anemone (*Anemone canadensis*): rhizome
- Field Pussytoes (*Antennaria neglecta*): rhizome
- Plantain-leaved Pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*): rhizome
- Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*): rhizome
- Harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*): rhizome
- Ivory Sedge (*Carex eburnea*): rhizome
- Palm Sedge (*Carex muskingumensis*): rhizome
- Pennsylvania Sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*): rhizome
- Plantain-leaved Sedge (*Carex plantaginea*): rhizome
- Partridge Pea (*Cassia fasciculata*): self-sowing annual
- Beak Grass (*Diarrhena obovata*): rhizome
- Large-leaved Aster (*Eurybia macrophylla*): rhizome
- Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*): stolon
- Wild Geranium (*Geranium maculatum*): rhizome
- Prairie Smoke (*Geum triflorum*): rhizome
- Longe-leaf Bluets (*Houstonia longifolia*): rhizome
- Path Rush (*Juncus tenuis*): rhizome
- Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*): rhizome
- Violet Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis violacea*): bulb offshoots
- Golden Ragwort (*Packera aurea*): rhizome
- Wild Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricate*): self-sowing
- Jacob's Ladder (*Polemonium reptans*): self-sowing
- Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium* or *Sisyrinchium campestre*): rhizome
- Zigzag Goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*): rhizome
- Dog Violet (*Viola conspersa*): rhizome
- Common Blue Violet (*Viola sororia*): rhizome



Photo by Leslie Pilgrim