

Creative Alternatives to Lawns

The use of perennial groundcovers in your yard can be a great replacement for traditional high maintenance grass lawns. These alternatives to lawns add a beautiful display of color and add texture into the landscape that will also benefit the birds and pollinators in our environment. By selecting plants that are native, you will have the added benefit of reducing the use of water, fertilizer and pesticides, making these environmentally friendly choices as well!

Letting Your Lawn Naturalize:

A plain green lawn isn't the best choice for everyone. One way to reduce your grass lawn is to allow the area to naturalize by adding self seeding plants. Select from native species to plant a meadow in sunny or shaded areas. In doing this, you're creating more habitat for local wildlife and pollinators that will greatly benefit our environment.



Ornamental Grasses:

Fill space in your yard with ornamental grasses that are low maintenance and provide a long season of interest. They're sure to bring beauty with their gorgeous seed heads in late summer/early fall. A mass planting or mixture of ornamental grasses add movement and visual interest with varying heights and textures.

Ground Covers/Low Growers:

Many groundcovers and low spreading plants can be used as lawn alternatives, providing an appealing alternative similar in height to grass. Please keep in mind that, although some groundcovers will tolerate high foot traffic, none will tolerate the same kind of traffic that a turf lawn can.



Garden Beds:

Incorporating raised beds and island beds into lawn areas can also add scent and color into your yard. Roses and plants that produce flowers for cutting are fabulous additions to any area of your property.

Lawn Alternatives

Botanical Name	Common Name	Sun	Foot Traffic	Recommended Use
Ajuga	Bugleweed	●●	***	Deep/dry shade
Antennaria	Pussytoes	○●	**	Moist or dry gritty soil
Aster ericoides	Heath Aster	○●	X	On slopes/erosion control
Campanula	Bellflower	○●	*	Moist soil in full sun or dappled shade
Carex	Sedge	○●●	**	Moist part or full shade
Chrysogonum virginicum	Gold and Green	●●	*	Deep/Dry part or full shade
Delosperma	Ice Plant	○	X	Well draining rocky/sandy soil
Eonymus kewensis	Dwarf Wintercreeper	●●	***	Creeping over rock walls
Fragaria	Wild Strawberry	○●●	*	Deep/dry shade, woodland conditions
Geranium cantabridgiense	Hardy Geranium	●●	X	Moist soil with shade in the afternoon
Herniaria glabra	Rupturewort	○●	**	Between pavers, poor soil
Isotoma fluviatilis	Blue Star Creeper	○●	**	Moist soil in part sun
Lamium galeobdolon	Yellow Archangel	●●	*	Deep/dry shade
Leptinella squalida	Brass Buttons	○●	*	Moist soil, part sun
Liriope muscari	Lily turf	●●	X	Moist soil, erosion control
Lotus corniculatus	Bird's Foot Trefoil	○●	*	Erosion control, poor soil
Mazus reptans	Creeping Mazus	●●	**	Moist part to full shade
Mitchella repens	Partridge Berry	●●	X	Moist woodland conditions
Pachysandra procumbens	Allegheny Spurge	●●	X	Moist or dry shade
Phlox divaricate/stolonifera	Woodland Phlox	●●	X	Moist woodland conditions
Sagina	Irish Moss	●●	**	Between pavers in shade
Sedum (low growing)	Stonecrop	○	*	Between pavers, dry hot conditions
Thymus	Creeping Thyme	○●	***	Between pavers, over stone walls
Veronica (low growing)	Creeping Speedwell	○	*	Moist soil in full sun

*** High Traffic ** Moderate Traffic * Minimal Traffic X No Traffic

○ Full Sun ● Part Sun ● Full Shade