

Groundcover
Evergreen

Map #66

Periwinkle
(*Vinca minor*)
Family: *Apocynaceae*



Leaves: The 1" long, ovate leaves bear an acute apex and base, with the underside lighter than the dark evergreen upper surface. When broken, they exude a milky juice.

Buds: opposite.

Stems: Although usually less than 12" long due to the plant's tendency to root at the nodes, the shiny green stems are very slender and glabrous when visible.

Bark: Not important

Flowers: The slightly showy, 1" diameter, 5-petaled flowers are non-fragrant and lilac-blue, appearing between March and April; curl clockwise looking like a pinwheel.

Fruits: Not important.

Habit: prostrate, evergreen groundcover with long vining stems which root where they touch the ground.

Culture: best in shady sites with highly organic, well-drained soils. It can tolerate a full range of soil pH ranges, but when planted in full sun the leaves may discolor because exposure to winter wind and sun will damage the foliage and possibly kill the plant. Poorly adapted to dry conditions which are more likely to be encountered in sunny locations. Weeds may become a problem within a ground cover planting in sun where weed seeds can germinate and better compete with the ground cover.

It is a good selection for erosion control, and it tolerates both foot traffic and dog urine. It is best planted on 1' centers.

Miscellaneous: This species is probably one of the most prevalent groundcovers in the home landscape, and with good reason. It's glossy, dark, shade tolerant evergreen foliage makes an excellent cover for bulbs and other perennials, and its rapid growth rate and color also lend an air of lushness to a site.

Cultivars: Many but not readily available. 'Bowles White' - large flowers, pink in bud, opening white.

Related species: Vinca vine (*Vinca major*) used in annual flower containers. Often variegated. Not rated hardy for WI but may survive winters in very protected locations near buildings, etc.

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