

Common Periwinkle, Lesser Periwinkle

Vinca minor

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Summary:

Foliage: Small leaves; evergreen

Height: About 4 inches tall

Spread: About 8 feet

Shape: Low-growing ground cover

Main features: Common Periwinkle is an attractive low-growing broad leaved evergreen ground cover. The plant produces 1-inch blue-violet flowers in early spring that are noticeable upon close inspection. Plants do best in light shade but will tolerate full sun and full shade; full sun plantings often show leaf discoloration. Common periwinkle has been documented as an invasive species. NatureServe's overall invasive rank is Low, and the ecological subrank is Insignificant. NatureServe's Invasive Rank Reasons Summary is "This garden escape is rare [sic rarely] know [sic known] to spread into conservation areas. It most often persists from former cultivation and sometimes can be found in open disturbed woodlands. It is escaped throughout the United States, and specifically can become a dominant and sometimes monotypic understory in the northeastern US." (reference at bottom).

Plant Needs:

Zone: 4 to 8

Light: All exposures but does best in part shade

Moisture: Average

Soil type: Well-drained with abundant organic matter; adaptable to less-than-ideal soils but plants are less thrifty

pH: Acid

Functions:

Common periwinkle can be used wherever an evergreen low-growing ground cover is appropriate.

Care:

No special care is needed for common periwinkle. There are a few serious fungal problems with this species, thus a fungicide application may be necessary. These problems are usually associated with prolonged periods or rain/humidity. Because plants are relatively short, weed infestation may be a problem.

Additional Information:

There are many cultivars (more than 30) that vary in flower color and foliage color. Some of the more popular cultivars are:

`Alba' white flowers

`Atropurpurea' large deep plum-purple flowers

`Bowles' ('Bowles Variety') large lavender-blue flowers

`Gertrude Jekyll' white flowers with smaller than typical leaves

`Golden' white flowers with yellow-margined leaves

'Sterling Silver' pale violet-blue flowers with cream variegation

Reference:

NatureServe – *Vinca minor*

http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/servlet/NatureServe?sourceTemplate=tabular_report.wmt&loadTemplate=species_RptComprehensive.wmt&selectedReport=RptComprehensive.wmt&summaryView=tabular_report.wmt&elKey=148703&paging=home&save=true&startIndex=1&nextStartIndex=1&reset=false&offPageSelectedElKey=148703&offPageSelectedElType=species&offPageYesNo=true&post_processes=&radiobutton=radiobutton&selectedIndexes=148703