

Japanese Pachysandra, Japanese Spurge

Pachysandra terminalis

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Summary:

Foliage: About 3 inch long lustrous dark green; evergreen

Height: About 8 inches tall

Spread: Indefinite by underground stems

Shape: Low-growing ground cover

Main features: Japanese pachysandra is a handsome low-growing evergreen groundcover.

This plant requires at least part shade and is perfectly happy in full shade. In early spring, small white flowers (about 1.5 inches long) occur at the tips of the stems. In zones 7 and 8, this ground cover requires year round shade. Unless restricted by some type of barrier (e.g., sidewalk), this species will slowly spread to adjacent areas/beds.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 4 to 8

Light: At least part shade to full shade

Moisture: Average

Soil type: Does best in well drained soils; soils with relatively high organic matter are ideal

pH range: Acid

Functions:

Japanese pachysandra is appropriate wherever an evergreen ground cover is needed provided that there is ample shade.

Care:

No special care is needed. Occasionally a leaf blight, the fungus *Volutella pachysandrae*, will devastate a Japanese pachysandra planting; stressed plants (e.g., too much sun, winter damage, insect damage) are more prone to this problem.

Additional Information:

There are a few cultivars in the trade. 'Green Carpet' is a relatively low and compact form with foliage that is darker green, smaller, and more lustrous than the species. 'Green Sheen' has very dark green glossy leaves and is slower growing than the species. 'Variegata' ('Silver Edge') has attractive leaves with white-edged margins

Alleghany pachysandra, *Pachysandra procumbens*, is a very attractive evergreen (zone 7 to 9) or semi-deciduous/deciduous (zone 5 to 6) ground cover. The leaves of this species are larger than those of Japanese pachysandra giving plants and the planting a bolder texture. Also, mature leaves take on a mottled appearance. This is a relatively slow-growing clump-forming ground cover that also has an absolute requirement for shade, adequate moisture, and well-drained organic soil. This species is infrequently offered by garden centers but its attractiveness makes it worthwhile addition to a garden.