

Wintercreeper Euonymus (*Euonymus fortunei*)

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Summary:

Foliage: Evergreen broadleaf Height: 4 inches as a ground cover 20 feet as a vine

Shape: Spreading

Wintercreeper euonymus is a low-growing evergreen ground cover that will climb when it encounters a vertical surface. There are several cultivars which vary in foliage color and height.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 4 to 9

Light: Partial shade to full sun

Moisture: Moist to dry

Soil Type: Sandy, loam, or clay

pH Range: 3.7 to 7.0

Functions:

Suggested uses for this plant include ground cover and climbing vine.

Planting Notes:

Transplants readily.

Tolerates wide ranges of soil conditions, except extremely wet conditions.

When using as a ground cover, space plants 18 to 24 inches apart in the spring.

Care:

Easy to maintain, as long as scale insects are controlled.

Some pruning of upright shoots keeps the ground cover more compact.

Problems:

Euonymus scale, a white-covered scale insect, is the most serious pest. A severe infestation will make the underside of leaves and the entire stem white. Unless controlled, this pest will eventually kill the plant.

Wintercreeper euonymus will spread to adjoining beds. Thus, it is best used when it is land locked (e.g., surrounded by pavement).

Wintercreeper euonymus is somewhat slow to fill in an area. Thus, weed invasion may initially be a problem in large beds.

Alternatives:

Consult local garden centers, historic or public gardens and arboreta regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.

Cultivars of *Euonymus fortunei*:

'Emerald and Gold' is a low-growing ground cover (1 to 2 feet high) which has green leaves with gold margins.

'Emerald Gaiety' is a low-growing ground cover (1 to 2 feet high) and has green leaves with white margins.

'Sarcoxie' is an upright form (up to 4 feet high) that makes an excellent, broad-leaved, erect evergreen shrub.

Purpleleaf wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei* var. *coloratus*) is an evergreen ground cover/vine for covering large areas, banks, slopes, and shaded areas under trees. Foliage turns purplish-red in early fall and remains this color throughout the winter.

Comments:

Wintercreeper is useful for training against walls, for climbing over low walls, and as a ground cover.

The vine may be allowed to completely cover a wall or may be thinned out to give a tailored effect. Once established, this species is difficult to eradicate.

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