

# Your Yard

## Get To Know Spunky Ground Covers

(NAPSA)—Ground covers are some of the most versatile plants for your yard. These problem-solving plants can provide color and texture in even the most challenging locations. With just a little maintenance, ground covers suppress weeds and keep soil from eroding. You can have fun learning some of their names and planting one that's right for you.

- Wine drinkers can offer a toast to *vinca minor* “Merlot.” This creeping, trailing ground cover with shiny green leaves and a burgundy flower in spring prefers well-drained soil. It grows best in shade or at least a spot with afternoon shade. Mature plants reach eight inches tall and spread up to 10 feet. The only hangover you'll get is if you let the plants trail over a rock wall or ledge.

- If you're partial to calico-flowered sofas or need something to soften the edges between pavers and flagstones, try “Pink Chintz.” It's a tiny thyme with fuzzy gray-green leaves and itty-bitty flowers in early spring. Don't let the delicate looks and girly name fool you; this is one tough grower that toler-



ates foot traffic. It can spread in a mat up to two feet wide. It likes full sun and needs very little water once established.

- Military types may want to plant brass buttons. That's the common name for “Platt's Black” *leptinella squalida*, an interesting ground cover with small, fernlike, chocolate-brown leaves with green edges. Tiny golden “brass button” flowers cover the surface in summer. The leaves are small, growing only two inches long and about half an inch wide. Brass buttons can serve as a lawn substitute in full sun to part shade and can rapidly spread if you provide enough moisture.

- Fans of murder mysteries can

point out the “Wolong Ghost” euonymus creeping through their gardens. This Chinese member of the winter creeper family gets its name from the silvery veins running through the narrow, dark green leaves. It likes to flit through part-shade gardens but won't scare the children away. Reaching six to 12 inches tall and about two feet wide with minimal care, Wolong Ghost is a good choice for a hill or an area that's hard to reach.

- Cat lovers may purr at pussytoes, the common name for *Antennaria dioica*. This rugged plant performs well in hot, sunny locations and in poor soil. The white, fuzzy foliage of a pussytoes plant spreads eight to 12 inches wide and produces pinkish-white flowers on stalks six to 12 inches tall, making it great for a rock garden or to edge a flower border. Just don't walk on it—like a real feline, it doesn't like to be stepped on.

These ground covers are part of a larger family of reliable performers in the Forever and Ever GroundCover line, available at fine home centers and independent garden centers.