Weed-suppressive Groundcovers

For further information and resources visit:
http://nysipm.cornell.edu/nursery_ghouse/weed_supp_grcovers.asp

The plants listed here have been evaluated under different growing conditions for their ease of establishment, low maintenance characteristics and their ability to exclude weeds. Our initial screening tests took place in Wausau (Finger Lakes region, zone 5) and Riverhead (eastern Long Island, zone 7), New York. Since then demonstration plots have been established across New York State. The foundation of the work was a collaboration between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Empire State Development’s Office of Private Sector Services, the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, the New York State Office of Energy Research and Development, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The guide was published in 2007 and revised in 2014.

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What’s in a name? A groundcover is a perennial plant used in masses for its visual wallop and to crowd out weeds. Many are gorgeous perennials that gardeners have used in flower borders for years. Now we’re finding that some are top performers in the “tough sites” department too. Fewer weeds means less herbicide use. Good news for you … and for the environment.

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Moss Phlox
Phlox subulata
ʼEmerald Blueʼ
Mat forming 4-6 inches high
North America
Zones 3-9

Butterfly Milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa
ʼEmerald Blueʼ
Sprawling 2-4 feet wide
North America
Zones 3-9

Catmint
Nepeta x faassenii
ʼWalkerʼs Lowʼ
Upright and spreading 12-24 inches high
Europe, Africa
Zones 3-8

Catmint
Nepeta x faassenii
ʼBlue Hillʼ
Upright
Clump forming 12-18 inches high
North America
Zones 4-8

Salvia
Salvia nemorosa / S. sylvestris
ʼBlue Hillʼ
Clump forming 20-40 inches high
Europe
Zones 5-9

Mounding dark green foliage covered with white flowers in September.
White Heath Aster
Aster ericoides
ʼSnow Flurryʼ
Low sun to partial shade.
Grasses best in dry soils.
North America
Zones 3-9

Two-row Stonecrop
Sedum spurium
ʼJohn Creechʼ
Clump forming 2-4 inches high
Asia
Zones 3-8

June blooming with fleshy, evergreen leaves and pink flowers in late summer.
White Heath Aster
Aster ericoides
ʼSnow Flurryʼ
Low sun to partial shade.
Grasses best in dry soils.
North America
Zones 3-9

Full sun.
Drought tolerant.
Grows best in well drained soils.

Profusion of early spring blue blooms, glossy evergreen foliage.
Moss Phlox
Phlox subulata
ʼEmerald Blueʼ
Mat forming 4-6 inches high
North America
Zones 3-9

Full sun.
Tolerates drought and even a little salt.
Grows best in well drained soil.
Profusion of early spring blue blooms, glossy evergreen foliage.
Butterfly Milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa
ʼEmerald Blueʼ
Sprawling 2-4 feet wide
North America
Zones 3-9

Full sun.
Vigorous grower, allow room so it doesnʼt crowd out neighboring plants.
Green-grey foliage. Long lasting blue flowers in spring/summer.
Autumn Goldenrod
Solidago gigantea
ʼGolden Flameʼ
Upright
Clump forming 18-24 inches high
North America
Zones 3-8

Blue flowers late spring through fall, attractive to pollinators and hummingbirds.
Salvia
Salvia nemorosa / S. sylvestris
ʼBlue Hillʼ
Clump forming 20-40 inches high
Europe
Zones 5-9

Tall, slender blue-green leaves turn to golden bronze in fall. Looks best planted in large groups. Free to bend and sway, provides a prairie look.
Salvia
Salvia nemorosa / S. sylvestris
ʼBlue Hillʼ
Clump forming 20-40 inches high
Europe
Zones 5-9

Filamentous seed heads decorate the garden in late fall.
Northern Dropseed
Sporobolus heterolepis
ʼThe Bluesʼ
Clump forming 24-48 inches high
North America
Zones 3-9

Mounding dark green foliage covered with white flowers in September.
White Heath Aster
Aster ericoides
ʼSnow Flurryʼ
Low sun to partial shade.
Grasses best in dry soils.
North America
Zones 3-9

Full sun.
Remove last yearʼs foliage by cutting to ground in late winter/early spring.
Tall, slender blue-green leaves turn to golden bronze in fall. Looks best planted in large groups. Free to bend and sway, provides a prairie look.
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ʼBlue Hillʼ
Clump forming 20-40 inches high
Europe
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Zones 3-9

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White Heath Aster
Aster ericoides
ʼSnow Flurryʼ
Low sun to partial shade.
Grasses best in dry soils.
North America
Zones 3-9

Full sun.
Cut back after first bloom to encourage vigorous re-bloom.
Long lasting blue flowers in spring/summer.
Catmint
Nepeta x faassenii
ʼWalkerʼs Lowʼ
Upright
Clump forming 12-24 inches high
Europe, Africa
Zones 3-8

Blue flowers late spring through fall, attractive to pollinators and hummingbirds.
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