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Plants for Your Pathway

Pretty Up Your Garden Walk With the Right Groundcover Between Pavers

A path of stepping stones can make an average garden instantly more inviting. And the right plantings make it even more magical. While gravel and sand are great options to fill in spaces between pavers, there's something special about a soft splash of green.

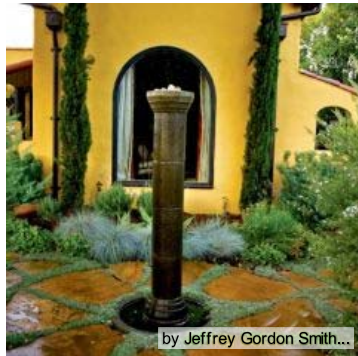
Choosing which type of groundcover to use **can be tough**. You want something you can walk on, that doesn't grow too high or too fast, and is suited for your environment. Here are 6 common ground cover options that do well between pavers. Read on to figure out which one is best for you:



by AMS Landscape Design Studios,....

When researching groundcovers, make sure you know which **USDA Plant Hardiness Zone** you're in, or go to your local nursery and ask them about the best options for your area. Consider what part of your yard your pavers will be in. Will they be in shade or sun most of the time?

The **Irish moss** surrounding these pavers works well in this shady side garden.

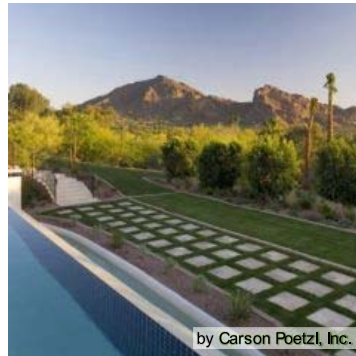


by Jeffrey Gordon Smith...

This landscape designer used **Dymondia margaretae**, a durable South-African groundcover that does best in USDA Hardiness zones 9-11.

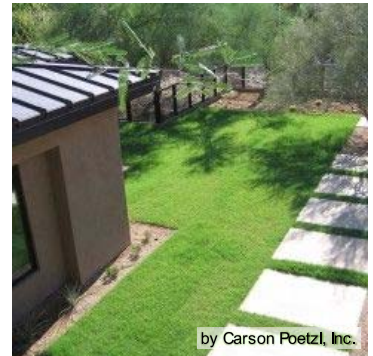
"As groundcover, the main thing is to make sure you're not planting something that's going to end up growing super high, so it doesn't cover the pavers," says Drew Sivgall, founder of Southern-California based **AMS Landscape Design Studios**. "Make sure whatever you use won't grow above four inches, or it's easy to mow down or trim."

Next: 6 options to consider



by Carson Poetzi, Inc.

1. Turf grass. Using grass always a good option, particularly if it's already incorporated into your landscape. Plant the grass seed or sod after your pavers are installed.



by Carson Poetzi, Inc.

If you set it up correctly, you should be able to just go over the pavers and grass with a mower. "Pavers are always slightly self-maintaining too," says Sivgals. "If they're in the sun, they can get hot enough to where nothing's really going to grow on top of them."



by The Garden Consultants, Inc.

2. Creeping thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*), USDA zones 4-8. This is a plant that does well in full sun, so place it in a hot, sunny path. Like the thyme you're used to using in cooking, it has rounded leaves and a wonderful fragrance. But unlike its counterpart, creeping thyme grows nice and low to the ground (usually not more than 2 centimeters tall), and is extremely tough. It will grow in very difficult soils and can handle inconsistent watering.



by Jeffrey Gordon Smith...

3. Elfin thyme (*Thymus serpyllum* 'Elfin'), USDA zones 4-8. Elfin thyme is much like creeping thyme, but in miniature. It's just as aromatic as its larger counterpart, and blooms with purple flowers in summer. Elfin thyme is a very slow-growing ground cover, and usually won't get more than 1-2 inches high. It's fairly drought tolerant, but should be watered when the top three inches of soil is dry. It grows in small, hilly bunches in the shade, but tends to have a more flat and horizontal appearance when grown in the sun.



by debora carl landscape design

4. Baby tears (*Soleirolia soleirolia*), USDA zones 9-11. Babytears is a little more lush than creeping thyme and looks a bit like moss. It blossoms with beautiful white flowers in the spring and like thyme, grows close to the ground. It grows quickly in a sun-to-shade environment and requires much more water than creeping thyme or elfin thyme.



by Ami Saunders, M.L.A.

5. Irish or Scotch Moss (*Sagina subulata*), USDA zones 4-8. Irish (also called Scotch) moss isn't really a moss, though it looks like one. It presents a very tight, dense group of small, soft leaves with a sponge-like look. Irish moss grows extremely quickly and isn't very particular about soil, but it does do better in slightly shady areas. Usually this is sold in flats, like sod. Just cut it into small strips and place it around your pavers.



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6. Dwarf mondo grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*), USDA zones 6-11. Dwarf mondo grass is a small, dark grass that grows in 4-inch tall clumps. It's much sturdier than the larger version and does best in filtered sunlight, though it can withstand full sunlight fairly well.



by Botanica Atlanta Landscape...

Also called dwarf monkey grass, dwarf mondo grass can retain its lush green color even under drought conditions. It's pest resistant and only needs to be mowed once a year. They plants are slow growers, so it may take a while for them to fill out like those in the photo above.

What kind of groundcover has worked best for you around your pavers?

More ideas:

8 Great Ways to Use Landscape Pavers
3 Fuss-Free Ways to Garden
Your Yard: Are You Ready to Lose the Lawn?