



Asarum canadense

Common or Canadian Wild Ginger

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

Native to rich, deciduous forests in the eastern half of North America, Wild Ginger is common in much of the Mid-Atlantic Region* although infrequent-to-rare in the Coastal Plain. It naturalizes to create a lush ground cover with velvety, heart-shaped leaves. Historically used as a flavor substitute for culinary ginger, consumption today is ill-advised. The Virginia Native Plant Society selected Wild Ginger as Wildflower of the Year for 2010.



Ground Cover	Colony, Flowers
Height: ½–1 foot	
Spread: 1–1½ feet	
Bloom Color: Brown-purple	
Characteristics	
Deciduous perennial ground cover	
Heart-shaped, veined, medium green basal leaves	
Tiny, ground-hugging, bell-shaped flowers appear from April to May, hidden by foliage	
Spreads slowly by rhizomes	
Attributes	
Tolerates wet soil and dense shade; drought-intolerant	Excellent Replacement for <i>Glechoma hederacea</i> - Ground Ivy <i>Hedera helix</i> - English Ivy <i>Liriope</i> species <i>Ornithogalum nutans</i> & <i>O. umbellatum</i> - Nodding Star-of-Bethlehem & Sleepydicik <i>Pachysandra terminalis</i> - Japanese Pachysandra <i>Vinca minor</i> - Periwinkle
No serious pests or diseases; snails and slugs may feed on leaves in early spring	
Deer rarely damage (may browse on occasion)	
Ethnobotanic uses; therapeutic uses (sedative, fever reducer); discouraged as substitute for culinary ginger as it may have toxic compounds	
Larval host for Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	
Soil Requirements: Acidic (prefers), well-drained	
Light Requirements: Partial Shade, Shade	
Water Requirements: Moist	
Divide mature plants early fall	
Use as edging, in rain, shade or woodland gardens, or massed on slopes to control erosion	
Hardiness: USDA Zones 4–6	

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Mary Free, Quarry Shade Garden



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