



Nothing brightens a landscape better than a cluster of black-eyed Susans.

Consider versatile ground covers

Ground covers are easy to maintain, fill in trouble spots, and will take care of themselves once established. To ensure success, it is necessary to choose a ground cover which is suitable to your soil conditions, exposure, and light. There are many varieties ranging from those which do well in deep shade to those which need bright sun. Among the many possible ground covers are vinca minor (myrtle or periwinkle), English ivy, ajuga, sedum, European ginger, and the chameleon plant. In addition, you can use ferns, ornamental grasses, petunias, pansies, phlox, or perennial geraniums.

Depending upon the condition of the soil whether it is poor, sandy soil or good, fertile soil there is a ground cover available. How fast an area will be covered depends on the kind of ground cover and its spacing. The number of plants per square foot needed to cover the area varies with the type of ground cover used. To determine which ground cover is best for your area, consult your local garden center. The following are basic guidelines for planting and caring for ground covers.

Before planting, remove all competing vegetation from the area to be planted, i.e. weeds, grasses, etc. Once all vegetation is removed, cover the area with 1" to 2" of peat moss. Spade or rototill the bed to a depth of approximately 6 inches. IMPORTANT: for ground covers to develop properly, soil must be loose.

Plant container plants with 1/2" of container above ground level. If the plant is in a plastic container, remove the plastic before planting.

Water thoroughly once a week. CAUTION: be careful of overwatering when planting in heavy soil, in shade, or where heavy mulch is used.

A trip to your local garden center or landscape professional will provide you with the information you need to include ground covers in your landscape. Visit the Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association's (PLNA) website (www.plna.com) for more gardening and landscape ideas.

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On this house the roof, vinyl siding and stone accent pieces complement each other. Cultured Stone® gives texture and scale to the overall appearance, while Generations™ Blends vinyl siding in forest gray acts as a comforting contrast to the powerful stone elements.

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complex angles, a monochromatic color scheme will help create balance.

Unlike interior designers who can use artificial lighting to enhance the color scheme of a room, homeowners must rely on natural light to enhance the exteriors of their homes. Choose colors that look good throughout the entire day - under direct sunlight, clouds and in the dark. Knowing this, take roofing and siding samples outside to make your decision instead of staying inside under artificial lighting. Also, view samples from different angles - straight on, side to side and from up above.

Once you've selected several styles and colors you like, work with your contractor to determine how each would work on your home.

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Your home - both inside and out - is a reflection of your sense of style.

If you're like most homeowners, you spend a great deal of time and effort personalizing the interior of your home, coordinating color, furniture, accessories and window treatments. Your choices in design and decoration tell a story about you and your family.

But what about when you're renovating the outside of your home? Nothing is more visible or makes a stronger statement to others than the outside of your house.

"When it comes to remodeling the exterior of the home, change is more often than not inspired by need," said Kim Lenz, director of marketing, Exterior Systems Business, Owens Corning. "You replace a roof because it's been damaged or it's leaking, and you install vinyl siding because you don't want to have to paint your house all the time to maintain its exterior. Although these changes are necessary from a performance standpoint, don't forget that they also present an excellent opportunity to improve the look and style of your home."

Here are a few tips from building materials leader Owens Corning that can help you create an attractive exterior style.

For starters, the exterior of a home begins at the curb, not at the front door. To extend your home's presence and make it seem larger than it is, pay attention to the entire perimeter of your home. Walkways, benches, landscaping, dramatic lighting and driveway embellishments set the stage for a home's exterior.

Homeowners often aren't aware of the wide variety of products, colors and accessories available today. Be sure to ask your contractor to provide a full range of color and style options that complement each other. Don't forget about decorative millwork, such as pediments and scalloped trim that can be added to entrances and windows to give a home Victorian charm. Or add artificial stone products to create a natural earthy feel to a home's exterior.

One of the simplest ways for homeowners to update their exterior is by using new color combinations. Vinyl siding, roofing and accessories for the exterior of the home, are available in carefully selected colors that complement a variety of architectural styles, designs and settings.

Use these simple steps to help assure the colors you choose will give your home a color scheme that you will love throughout the years:

- Light Colors Make Things Look Larger: On a smaller home, a light color can make it look much larger. Also, your home will seem closer to the front of the lot when done in warm colors such as yellows, reds and oranges.
- Deeper Colors Make Things Look Smaller: Deep, dark colors - especially cool colors such as blues and greens - can create the impression that your home is set back farther on your lot. If your home is close to other homes, a dark color might make the area seem less crowded.
- Also, keep in mind that with heavily wooded or shady landscaping, a dark color might make your home "disappear" at night. Instead, try using lighter colors to set your house apart from its surroundings.
- One Color Scheme Creates Balance: On a home with many

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