



## Design for Everyday Living

# Common Periwinkle

(*Vinca minor*)

by

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**Family:** Apocynaceae—Dogbane family

**Origin:** Europe and western Asia

**Classification:** Viney type plant, broadleaf evergreen

**Uses:** Ground cover, rock gardens, rock walls

**Height:** 3 to 6 inches

**Spread:** 2 feet to indeterminate

**Hardiness:** Zone 4 (-20°F to -10°F) (-29°C to -23°C)

**Bark (Stems):** Smooth, glabrous, wiry, rooting at the tips and nodes

**Flowers:** Mid-spring through summer; perfect, tubular; lilac-blue, 5 petals, to ¾" across; often hidden under foliage

**Fruit:** Follicle, inconspicuous

**Foliage:** Opposite in 2 or 4 rows, simple, ½ to 2 inches long; glossy, short petiole; oblong to ovate; lustrous dark green above, lighter green beneath; exudes milky juice when broken



Photo by David R. Creel, University Photographer

**Texture:** Medium to fine

**Growth Rate:** Moderate

**Form:** Prostrate, hugging the ground forming a dense mat or carpet

**Root System:** Fibrous, spreading, shallow

**Soil Requirement:** pH 6.0 to 8.0; rich in organic matter and well drained; tolerant of a wide variety of soil conditions

**Maintenance:** Average; fertilize in the spring with a complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10 at a rate of 6 to 8 pounds per 1,000 square feet; obtain 2 year field grown plants or those grown in pots, 9" spacing; tolerant of some mowing, set mower at highest setting and mow in early spring

**Situation:** Sun or heavy shade, leaves may burn in winter if grown in full sun, but flowers best in full sun

**Insects & Diseases:** Botrytis Blight, Dieback, Vinca Canker, Leaf Spots, Root & Stem Rot, Aster-yellows

**Propagation:** Division, softwood cuttings, seed, and layering

**Varieties:** *Vinca minor 'Alba'* —White Common Periwinkle, white flowers  
*Vinca minor 'Atropurpurea'* —Purple Common Periwinkle, purple flowers  
*Vinca minor 'Bowlesii'* —Bowles Common Periwinkle, flowers darker blue and larger than

species, grows vigorously in clumps  
*Vinca minor 'Flore Pleno'*(*V.m. 'Multiplex'*) —Purple Double Common Periwinkle, double, purple flowers  
*Vinca minor 'Variegata'* —Yellow Blotch Common Periwinkle, blue flowers, foliage variegated yellow

**Remarks:** Good ground cover despite problems; transplants well, plant in early September or early spring; sometimes called Myrtle, Running Myrtle, and Lesser Periwinkle; bulbs may be planted under the periwinkle for seasonal change. Will remain long after cultivation ceases