1. For best coverage, ground cover plants should be installed in a staggered pattern, as seen below. Use care when planting under trees to avoid damaging tree roots; leave at least three feet of unplanted area around the tree base.

2. If area to be planted has weeds and/or grass, carefully apply a weed killer such as glyphosate (Roundup), directly to the unwanted plants. Be sure to follow label directions! Wait for unwanted plants to die (takes two weeks or more), remove them, and grade area for planting. If the planting area is bare soil, proceed to next step.

3. Install plants as illustrated below. A wide hole no deeper than the root ball is best. Be sure that the top of the root ball is no deeper than the existing landscape’s soil surface. Planting “high” (slightly above surrounding soil surface) is best, to allow for mulch.

4. Fill the space around the root ball with the soil from the original hole (no soil amendments are necessary unless a soil test indicates otherwise). Gently firm the soil; do not pack the soil.

5. Water thoroughly while planting to remove air pockets in the planting area.

6. Apply a 3 to 4 inch layer of organic mulch, keeping the mulch 3 inches away from plant stems. Recommended mulches include:
   - Pine Bark
   - Pine Straw
   - Recycled Yard Waste Mulch
   - Eucalyptus Bark
   - Melaleuca Mulch

7. Water thoroughly to establish plants, using the following recommended schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Watering Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Water daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Water every 2 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hand water twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Water once a week, more when plants wilt from dryness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Some Local Plant Nurseries in Southern Pinellas County** (subject to change)

- **Banyan Scapes Inc.**
  932 49th St. So.,
  Gulfport  727-323-5484

- **Carroll’s Garden Center**
  4950 38th Ave. No.,
  St. Petersburg  727-527-5418

- **Country Club Nursery**
  9850 Starkey Rd.,
  Largo  727-397-4438

- **Dolin’s Garden Center**
  801 62nd Ave. No.,
  St. Petersburg  727-525-3434

- **Gulf Coast Garden Center**
  4355 Haines Rd.,
  St. Petersburg  727-522-3074

- **Hazel’s Garden & Nursery**
  5063 Dartmouth Ave. No.,
  St. Petersburg  727-321-4599

- **Jene’s Tropical Fruit Trees**
  6831 Central Ave.,
  St. Petersburg  727-344-1668

- **Kathy’s Korner Nursery / Tree Farm**
  3118 62nd Ave. No., St. Petersburg  727-525-9640

- **Seminole Nurseries**
  6230 102nd Ave. No., Pinellas Park  727-545-9619

- **Twigs & Leaves**
  2131 Central Avenue
  St. Petersburg  727-822-5400

- **Wilcox Nursery**
  12501 Indian Rocks Rd.,
  Largo  727-595-2073

- **Willow Tree Nursery**
  4401 49th St. No., St. Petersburg  727-522-2594

**DISCLAIMER.** This publication is a guide for residents desiring to know more about drought tolerant ground covers and proper plant installation practices. Contact the horticulture department of your local county’s Extension office for additional information. Persons involved in the creation, production, or delivery of this information shall not be liable for any direct, indirect, consequential, or incidental damages (including property damage, damages for loss of business profits, business interruption, etc.) arising out of the use of this information, or any omission in or inaccuracy of any information.

Compiled by Water Resources Department, Water Conservation Office, May 2014

“Converting from a traditional turf landscape to a water efficient landscape through proper choice of plants and careful design can reduce outdoor water use by 20 to 50 percent.”

EPA WaterSense, 2009
### Why Use Drought-Tolerant Ground Covers?

- Lower maintenance than most lawns
- Reduced air pollution - no mowing!
- Assists with percolation of rain water through the soil
- Better options exist for shaded areas than turfgrass
- Filters fertilizer & other chemicals, minimizing pollution of local waterways
- Minimizes erosion by holding soil
- Attractive flowers and leaves
- Reduces heat reflection

### Why Try Natives?

- Adapted to the local weather conditions, including extremes
- Adapted to the soil conditions of a given area
- Usually have few pest problems
- Decreased maintenance, when used and established correctly
- The best choice for attracting native wildlife

### Resources for Florida Native Plants:
- Florida Native Plant Society, local chapter: pinellas.fnpschapters.org
- Florida Association of Native Nurseries: PlantRealFlorida.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ground Cover</th>
<th>Spacing</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perennial Peanut</td>
<td>1'</td>
<td><em>Arachis glabrata.</em> Full sun. High salt tolerance. Full to part sun. <em>Trim along walks; takes time to root.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Sunflower</td>
<td>4'</td>
<td><em>Helianthus debilis.</em> High salt tolerance. Full to part sun. <em>Re-seeds itself.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liriope</td>
<td>18”</td>
<td>*Liriope spp. Spacing 18”. Good salt tolerance. Full sun to shade. <em>Keep crown clear of debris.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Daze</td>
<td>1”</td>
<td><em>Evolvulus glomeratus.</em> Spacing 1”. High salt tolerance. Part sun. <em>Keep crown clear of debris.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matchweed/Frogfruit</td>
<td>2'</td>
<td><em>Phyla nodiflora.</em> Spacing 2’. Poor salt tolerance. Full to part sun. <em>Trim from walks and roadways.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwarf Jasmine</td>
<td>3'</td>
<td><em>Trachelospermum asiaticum.</em> Full sun to shade. Good salt tolerance. Spacing 18”. <em>Takes time to root.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwarf Oyster Plant</td>
<td>2’</td>
<td>*Coontie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**NOTE:** ❖ indicates a Florida Native Plant