

Hedera helix - English Ivy (*Araliaceae*)

Hedera helix is a vigorous and dense evergreen landscape groundcover or vine. English Ivy is adapted to sun or shade, widely grown in zone 5 and warmer, but hardy to zone 4 (a minimum of -30 degrees F in severe winters) if the cultivar 'Thorndale' is utilized.

FEATURES

Form

-groundcover, to 8" high and typically spreading 2-10' in a prostrate mat growth habit, or as a vine, climbing up to 50' as a structural cover
-rapid growth rate

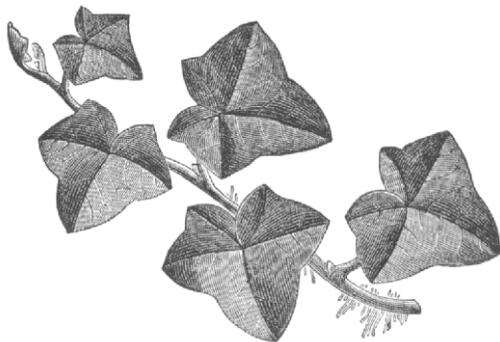
Culture

-partial to full shade
-performs best in moist, well-drained soils, but is adaptable to many adverse conditions, including hot, dry situations in sun or shade
-propagated by rooted stem cuttings
-Ginseng Family, with cosmetic leaf spots sometimes occurring during wet periods of summer
-mulch at transplanting to prevent weed establishment and winter freeze heaving

-one may utilize English Ivy to go up a brick or stone wall, but it is not advisable to allow the vine habit to engulf the base of a tree trunk
-abundantly available in flats

Foliage

-emerging kelly green and then changing to glossy dark evergreen
-alternate, with the juvenile form (most common), broadly ovate, 3- to 5-lobed with shallow sinuses
-adult form (on old flowering branches) rhombic to ovate, with an acute base and tip
-both forms have entire margins, with green-white veins radiating from the upper petiole
-autumn color dark green, becoming green-bronzed or with winter burn brown margins by the end of winter



Flowers

-green-white inflorescences in Oct.
-inconspicuous, sparse, rare, and only on mature growth

Fruits

-inconspicuous and rare
-black fruits maturing in Apr. of the following season

Twigs

-light brown with either functional roots (groundcover habit) or aerial roots for clasping (vine habit)

Trunk

-tan on extremely old vines

USAGE

Function

-evergreen groundcover for foundations, entranceways, under shade trees, or in raised planters
-evergreen structural cover for walls (usually stone or brick)

Texture

-medium texture
-thick density

Assets

-broadleaf evergreen groundcover or vine

Liabilities

-some cosmetic leaf problems may occur in wet summers (leaf spot) or harsh winters (winter burn)
-retains some blown leaves in autumn and winter

Habitat

-Zones 5 to 9 (landscape cultivars are often selected for cold hardiness in zone 4)
-Native to the Caucasian Mountains of Europe

SELECTIONS

Alternates

-evergreen groundcovers or vines (*Euonymus fortunei* 'Colorata', *Liriope spicata*, *Vinca minor*, etc.)

Cultivars - Variants - Related species

-many cultivars of English Ivy have been selected for variegated (white or yellow), cutleaf, or curly foliage, or for dwarf habit and slow growth rate, but most of these are usually zone 6 in cold hardiness at best, and are relegated to indoor plants or southern habitats
-*Hedera helix* 'Thorndale' - slightly larger leaves than normal, a derivative of the standard 'Baltica' and superior to it and virtually all others in cold hardiness (zone 4)