**Pachysandra terminalis** - Japanese Pachysandra or Japanese Spurge  
* (Buxaceae)

**FEATURES**

**Form**
- medium-sized, herbaceous perennial evergreen groundcover
- about 10" tall, always used as a groundcover in group or mass plantings, with each plant slowly spreading via a combination of its basal shoots and leaning top growth
- procumbent mat growth habit
- slow growth rate

**Culture**
- partial shade to deep shade
- prefers a moist, well-drained, acidic, rich soil in full shade, but is tolerant of periodically dry soils as long as they are well-drained, and is tolerant of soils of neutral to slightly alkaline pH
- propagated primarily by rooted stem cuttings, but also by clump division, or harvest of the rooted stolons or daughter plants at the clump perimeter
- leaf blight, stem cankers, and leaf spots are the principal diseases (may vary from cosmetic to serious), and scales and nematodes are the primary serious pests
- commonly available in flats
- plant 6-12" apart (depending upon the size of the transplant and how quickly you want the groundcover to fill in) and mulch lightly at transplanting
- plants will become very chlorotic and will die out in patches if improperly sited in full sun or partial sun, or if sited in periodically wet or poorly drained soils
- a typical planting will take about 3 yrs. to fully establish a solid carpet of groundcover; in the interim, a light mulch will retain soil moisture and reduce the invasion of weeds
- leaves that fall on the groundcover in autumn should be gently raked and blown out to minimize later disease problems
- prolonged spring or summer rains (or periodic irrigation) may cause outbreaks of *Volutella pachysandrae*, leading to brown patches of severe leaf spot, leaf blight, and stem canker
- dense foliage can also be a severe impediment in trying to eradicate infestations by scale (an insect with a white "shell" that attaches to the lower leaf surface and looks like a white "dot"), as it is very difficult to apply sprays to leaf undersides at ground level

**Foliage**
- medium to dark green
- evergreen
- alternate leaves becoming clustered at apex
- obovate
- dentate at tip
- glabrous and shiny
- dark green

**Flowers**
- white
- late Mar.-early Apr.
- on 1-2" terminal inflorescences; almost insignificant from an ornamental perspective

**Fruits**
- white, terminal fruit rare and inconspicuous

**Twigs**
- new vertical shoot growth (about 2-4" per yr). occurs in 2 forms: from new basal shoots arising from the underground stolons, and from vertical extension of the pre-existing but procumbent old stems (these are the 2 ways by which each parent plant of the groundcover slowly expands in diameter and fills in the planting)
- the light green new shoot growth is herbaceous in the spring, but becomes semi-woody by winter

**Trunk**
- not applicable

**USAGE**

**Function**
- evergreen groundcover for northern or northeastern sides of buildings or under dense shade of trees

**Texture**
- medium texture
- thick density

**Assets**
- dense carpet of glossy evergreen foliage as a groundcover

**Liabilities**
- slow to establish as a solid mat of foliage
- becomes chlorotic or dies out in partial to full sun
- requires partial to full shade for best performance
- sometimes has foliar diseases or root nematodes
- retains blown leaves

**Habitat**
- Zones 4 -8
- Native to Japan

**SELECTIONS**

**Alternates**
- evergreen groundcovers (*Euonymus fortunei* var. *coloratus*, *Hedera helix*, *Vinca minor*, etc.)
- groundcovers for either partial shade or full shade conditions (*Aegopodium podagraria 'Variegatum*', *Hedera helix*, *Hypericum calycinum*, *Lamiastrum galeobdolon 'Variegatum*', *Liriope spicata*, *Vinca minor*, *Waldsteinia ternata*, etc.)

**Variants**
- *Pachysandra terminalis 'Green Carpet'* - the most popular cultivar; selected for cold hardiness, compact habit, and deep waxy green color
- *Pachysandra terminalis 'Variegata' ('Silver Edge')* - mottled with silver, cream, or white variegation around the leaf margins