

SLIPPERY SLOPES!

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Two scenarios...eroding, or covered with grass? Grass cover at least stops or slows soil loss, but can be difficult and dangerous to mow.

Do's:

Do assess the site for amount of slope to see if mowing is too dangerous. A general rule of thumb is if after taking three steps, you have risen more than the height of your knee, the slope is too steep. If it is shady, grass will not be a logical choice.

Do consider other solutions If it is too steep. Riprap rock is sometimes necessary to stop erosion, and can still be planted once soil loss is halted. Determine if letting mother nature plant it with pioneer species is acceptable, if not, it may be managed in the landscape as a rock garden.

Do consider terracing, which can create all sorts of landscape opportunities.

Do assess site for amount of sun and shade throughout the day, and if soil is usually dry or moist from a "seep". If there is not enough sun, so that grass is not an option, you will need specific information to select the optimal perennial plants to cover slope.

Do use mixed plantings that are pleasing and naturalistic, and can forgive the loss of a few plants without being ruined, or even the addition of something new and better.

Do what you must to halt soil loss during plant establishment. Anchoring methods, planting methods, erosion stops such as staking, and mulch are all allies. Best done during cool, moist time of year, to reduce watering needs, but a supply of water to the site is needed to protect your investment.

DON'TS:

Don't till if already covered with grass. Kill grass with herbicide and leave in place to keep soil anchored while other plants are growing in. Minimize soil disturbance when planting.

Don't expect sowing with "wildflowers" to be an easy cure-all. If it were that easy, why aren't we seeing wildflower meadows everywhere? They can be difficult to establish and even then, weeds and pioneer species will take over unless they are edited and maintained.

Don't go with a "polka dot" planting design. Intrusive, unnatural and unforgiving of the loss of a plant or two.

SHRUBS EASY TO ROOT FROM CUTTINGS:

- Abelia
- Agarista - poplarleaf leucothoe (shade)
- Anisetree (sun or shade)
- Blueberry (sun or shade)
- Boxwood (sun or light shade)
- Buddleia
- Crapemyrtle
- Forsythia
- Cryptomoria
- Fig
- Grapes (including muscadines)
- Holly (most species, yaupon can be tricky) Inkberry holly can tolerate shade.
- Hydrangea (bigleaf, smooth and oakleaf need some shade, while panicle can take full sun)
- Many Junipers
- Osmanthus (sun or shade)
- Rose of Sharon
- Roses
- Spirea
- Virginia sweetspire
- Weigela
- Willow
- Winter Jasmine (sun or shade)
- Viburnum (sun or shade) Prague is a particular good choice.

FOR WET SITES:

- Buttonbush
- Chokeberry (Aronia)
- Clethra
- Dogwood (NOT flowering dogwood, but other species, such as *Cornus amomum*, *sanguinea*, *racemosa*, and *sericea*.)
- Possumhaw (deciduous holly)
- Spicebush
- Waxmyrtle
- Willow
- Winterberry holly
- Virginia sweetspire

Consider herbaceous plants that will cover wet sites such as canna, swamp mallow, yellowflag iris, sweetflag, spiderwort, sensitive fern, bog sage, hardy elephant ears