

WILD GINGER

Asarum canadense

A great groundcover that grows in thick mats. Although not related to culinary ginger, the roots of this plant produce a scent that is reminiscent that ginger. Fresh or dried roots were used by early Americans as a ginger substitute, but the plant is not normally used today for culinary purposes.



Description: Basically a stem less plant which features two downy, heart-shaped to kidney-shaped, handsomely veined, dark green, basal leaves (to 6" wide). Cup-shaped, purplish brown flowers (1" wide) appear in spring on short, ground-level stems arising from the crotch between the two basal leaves.

Natural Habitat: Deep woods and thickets.

Size: 4-6" high

Growth Rate: Slow

Light: Light-moderate shade

Planting and Care: Easily grown in average, medium wet to wet, well-drained soil, in part shade to full shade. Prefers constantly moist, acidic soils in heavy shade.

Ornamental Value: Flowers are quite attractive on close inspection, but bloom singly on or near the ground and are usually hidden from view by the foliage.

Landscape Value: Usually grown as a ground cover in shady areas. Woodland gardens, native plant gardens or naturalized areas. Also may be used for edging.