**Asarum canadense**  
**Common or Canadian Wild Ginger**

Native to rich, deciduous forests in the eastern half of North America, Wild Ginger is common in much of the Mid-Atlantic Region* even though infrequent-to-rare in the Coastal Plain. It naturalizes to create a lush ground cover with velvety, heart-shaped leaves. Historically used as a flavor substitute for culinary ginger, consumption today is ill-advised. The Virginia Native Plant Society selected Wild Ginger as Wildflower of the Year for 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ground Cover</th>
<th>Colony, Flowers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Height: ½–1 foot</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spread: 1–1½ feet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bloom Color: Brown-purple</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Characteristics**

- Deciduous perennial ground cover
- Heart-shaped, veined, medium green basal leaves
- Tiny, ground-hugging, bell-shaped flowers appear from April to May, hidden by foliage
- Spreads slowly by rhizomes

**Attributes**

- Tolerates wet soil and dense shade; drought-intolerant
- No serious pests or diseases; snails and slugs may feed on leaves in early spring
- Deer rarely damage (may browse on occasion)
- Ethnobotanic uses; therapeutic uses (sedative, fever reducer); discouraged as substitute for culinary ginger as it may have toxic compounds
- Larval host for Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly

**Growing and Maintenance Tips**

- Soil Requirements: Acidic (prefers), well-drained
- Light Requirements: Partial Shade, Shade
- Water Requirements: Moist
- Divide mature plants early fall
- Use as edging, in rain, shade or woodland gardens, or massed on slopes to control erosion
- Hardiness: USDA Zones 4–6

**Excellent Replacement for**

- *Glechoma hederacea* - Ground Ivy
- *Hedera helix* - English Ivy
- *Liriope species*
- *Ornithogalum nutans* & *O. umbellatum* - Nodding Star-of-Bethlehem & Sleepydick
- *Pachysandra terminalis* - Japanese Pachysandra
- *Vinca minor* - Periwinkle

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Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic

[Image by Mary Free, Quarry Shade Garden]

*developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria*