Zebrina pendula Wandering Jew
Edward F. Gilman

Introduction
It would be difficult to find a more colorful or faster-growing groundcover than wandering Jew (Fig. 1). The purple-green leaves with broad, silvery stripes and purple undersides are produced along the succulent stems, which root wherever they touch soil. Rapidly creating a thick, 6- to 12-inch-high mat of colorful foliage, a groundcover of wandering Jew will easily hide fallen litter from trees growing above it. Stems root as they touch the ground. Small, insignificant, rose-pink flowers are produced among the leaves of wandering Jew all through the year.

General Information
Scientific name: Zebrina pendula
Pronunciation: zee-BRYE-nuh PEND-yoo-luh
Common name(s): wandering Jew
Family: Commelinaceae
Plant type: herbaceous; ground cover
USDA hardiness zones: 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; ground cover; naturalizing; hanging basket; suitable for growing indoors; cascading down a wall
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Figure 1. Wandering Jew

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.


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**Description**
- **Height:** .5 to 1 feet
- **Spread:** depends upon supporting structure
- **Plant habit:** prostrate (flat); spreading
- **Plant density:** moderate
- **Growth rate:** fast
- **Texture:** fine

**Foliage**
- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** entire
- **Leaf shape:** ovate
- **Leaf venation:** bowed
- **Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- **Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches
- **Leaf color:** purple or red; variegated
- **Fall color:** no fall color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**
- **Flower color:** pink
- **Flower characteristic:** flowers periodically throughout the year

**Fruit**
- **Fruit shape:** oval
- **Fruit length:** less than .5 inch
- **Fruit cover:** dry or hard
- **Fruit color:** unknown
- **Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**
- **Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable
- **Current year stem/twig color:** reddish
- **Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

**Culture**
- **Light requirement:** plant grows in the shade
- **Soil tolerances:** slightly alkaline; occasionally wet; clay; sand; acidic; loam
- **Drought tolerance:** moderate
- **Soil salt tolerances:** poor
- **Plant spacing:** 18 to 24 inches

**Other**
- **Roots:** not applicable
- **Winter interest:** no special winter interest
- **Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding
- **Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant
- **Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**Use and Management**
Wandering Jew will grow in a variety of soils but should be planted in partial to deep shade and receive regular waterings. Plants have marginal salt-tolerance.

The cultivar ‘Purpusii’ has dark red or red-green, unstriped, hairy leaves. ‘Quadricolor’ has metallic-green leaves striped with green, red, and white. There is also a green and white cultivar available.

Propagation is by stem cuttings, which root easily.

**Pests and Diseases**
No pests or diseases are of major concern, but it is occasionally bothered by mites.