

# *Liriope spicata* Creeping Lilyturf<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Thin green leaves and attractive, violet-blue flowers give this plant its charm, although flowers are not as showy as those of *Liriope muscari* (Fig. 1). It forms a dense, uniform cover, unlike *Liriope muscari*, which forms clumps until well established several years after planting. Creeping lilyturf is a 6- to 10-inch-tall evergreen perennial that is useful in the landscape as a ground cover. This plant spreads quickly by rhizomes and can invade adjacent turf areas or other ground cover beds. Therefore, this liriopie may be best suited for planting in a bed surrounded by hardscape or confined with an edging (root barrier) that is 18 inches deep. The small, purple flowers occur in terminal racemes that nest in with the foliage. These flowers appear in the summer and are followed by blue-black berrylike fruits. Fruits are not produced in abundance.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Liriope spicata*

**Pronunciation:** luh-RYE-oh-pee spy-KAY-tuh

**Common name(s):** creeping lilyturf

**Family:** *Liliaceae*

**Plant type:** perennial; herbaceous; ornamental grass

**USDA hardiness zones:** 6 through 10 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** year round

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10:** year round

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** mass planting; edging; naturalizing

**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

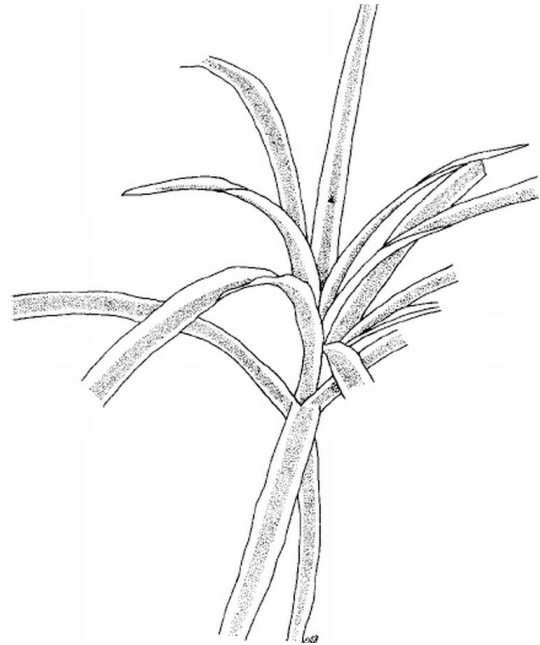


Figure 1. Creeping lilyturf

## Description

**Height:** .5 to 1 feet

**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** fine

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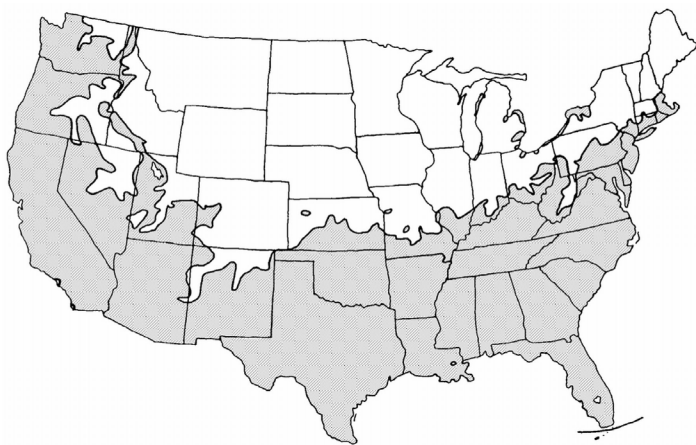


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire

**Leaf shape:** linear

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** 12 to 18 inches

**Leaf color:** variegated

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** violet-blue

**Flower characteristic:** summer flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** round

**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit cover:** fleshy

**Fruit color:** black

**Fruit characteristic:** showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** not applicable

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in part shade/part sun;

plant grows in the shade

**Soil tolerances:** alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 6 to 12 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant

**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## Use and Management

Creeping lilyturf is not a good plant for bordering a sidewalk or for use as an edging because it spreads too quickly. Use *Liriope muscari* instead. But it will grow well underneath trees or around shrubs. However, like other liriopae, it will not tolerate regular foot traffic.

Liriope can grow in a sunny location, but prefers one that has partial shade or full shade. It prefers well-drained soils and is moderately tolerant of drought and salt spray. Wet soil produces many suckers. This plant does have a negative reaction to high temperatures and can turn yellow and melt out in warm weather in the full sun. Liriope beds can be mowed each spring before the new growth begins to eliminate last year's unsightly foliage. This produces a clean-looking bed and improves appearance. If you wait to cut after new growth begins, you will cut off the tops of the new leaves.

Lilyturf is most often propagated by division of the clumps or tubers. It will also grow from seed if the pulp is removed.

## Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Grasshoppers may occasionally damage the foliage.