

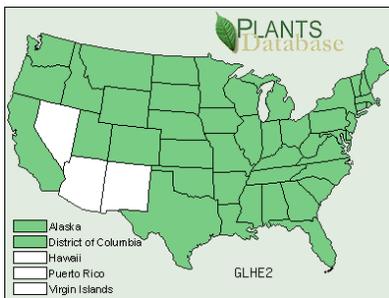


## Ground Ivy *Glechoma hederacea* L.

**Common Names:** cat's-foot, creeping Charlie, creeping Jenny, field balm, gill-over-the-ground, gill, ground ivy, haymaids, robin-runs-away

**Native Origin:** Europe

**Description:** A perennial herb in the mint family (*Lamiaceae*) that sprawls along the ground to form thick tangled mats. Slender, square stems have numerous flowering branches, grow 12 to 18 inches long, and may lean on surrounding vegetation for support in the vertical position. The leaves are simple, opposite, long-petiolated, kidney-shaped, bluntly toothed, deep green and ¼ to 3 inches long. Leaves have a musky mint odor when crushed. Two to five small tube-shaped flowers are borne in a series of whorls on a short erect flower stem. Flowers bloom from March to May, have two-lipped corolla, and are blue-violet with purple spots on the lower lip. Each flower produces pods containing four smooth nutlets. Shallow fibrous roots form at the base of the plant and at leaf nodes on the stem. It spreads vegetatively by creeping stems and to a lesser degree by seed.



**Habitat:** Ground ivy is one of the first to bloom in the spring. It is located in disturbed areas, open woods, forest edges, damp, shaded areas, lawns, gardens, pastures, road and railroad right-of ways, and waste grounds. It is occasionally found on river banks and floodplains. It grows primarily on damp, heavy, fertile and calcareous soils with pH ranging from 5.5 to 7.5. It does not tolerate strongly acidic soils. It is also salinity intolerant.

**Distribution:** This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in CT, DC, IN, KY, MD, MI, NC, NJ, OR, PA, TN, VA, WI, and WV.

**Ecological Impacts:** It can form dense mats that eliminate other vegetation.

**Toxicity:** This plant is toxic to many vertebrates. In particular, it is toxic to horses when eaten in large quantities, either fresh or in hay. New plants may also develop from the seed bank after initial control measures.

**Control and Management:** Once established, this plant is difficult to control because it is hard to remove all root and stolon fragments. Seed banks may also remain viable after control methods are used.

- **Manual-** Pull or rake small patches when soil is damp; remove all roots
- **Chemical-** Large infestations can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate, 2 4-D, dicamba, and mecoprop. Fall applications of fertilizer containing 2,4-D in lawn areas may be effective. Spot applications of 2, 4-D in combination with dicamba and mecoprop can be used when plants are flowering or after the first hard frost in fall. Follow label and state requirements.
- **Biological control-** A new rust fungus, *Puccinia glechomatis*, that attacks ground ivy has potential as a biocontrol for this invasive species. The fungus forms small tan dots on the undersides of the leaves and stems. A severe infection can cause death of a whole leaf segment or an entire stolon and all its leaves.

**References:** [www.forestimages.org](http://www.forestimages.org), <http://plants.usda.gov>, [www.nps.gov/plants/alien/list/a.htm](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/list/a.htm)  
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