

# *Ajuga reptans*: Common Bugle, Bugleweed, Carpet Bugleweed<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

This ground-hugging groundcover produces a profusion of dark green to bronze- or purple-colored leaves in a flat rosette, spreading fairly quickly by runners or stolons. Plant on 6- to 12-inch centers for quick establishment of a thick ground cover. Six-inch-tall spikes of small blue flowers are produced in spring to early summer and are especially attractive when plants are massed together. There are selections with foliage variegated in green, white, red, yellow, and pink.



Figure 1. Full form—*Ajuga reptans*: common bugle, bugleweed, carpet bugleweed.

Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf—*Ajuga reptans*: common bugle, bugleweed, carpet bugleweed.

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## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Ajuga reptans*

**Pronunciation:** uh-JOO-guh REP-tanz

**Common name(s):** Common bugle, bugleweed, carpet bugleweed

**Family:** *Lamiaceae*

**Plant type:** ground cover; perennial; herbaceous

**USDA hardiness zones:** 4 through 10A (Figure 4)

**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 and 11:** year-round

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**Origin:** native to Africa, temperate Asia, and Europe  
**Invasive potential:** invasive and not recommended by UF/IFAS faculty (reassess in 10 years)  
**Uses:** mass planting; container or above-ground planter; ground cover; edging  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 3. Flower—*Ajuga reptans*: common bugle, bugleweed, carpet bugleweed.  
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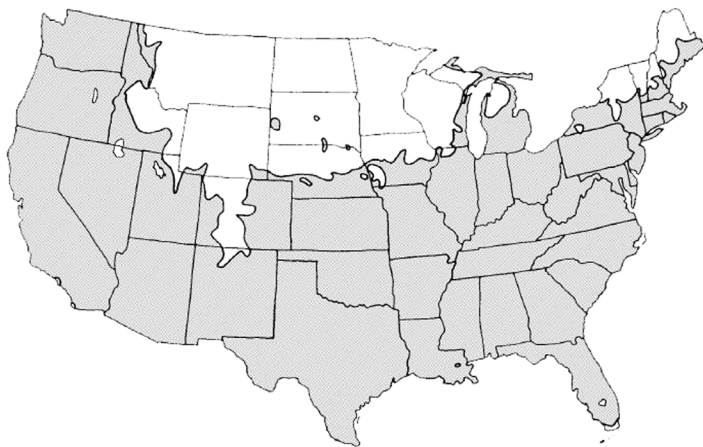


Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 0 to ½ feet  
**Spread:** ½ to 1 feet  
**Plant habit:** prostrate (flat)  
**Plant density:** dense  
**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** medium

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** basal rosette  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** undulate  
**Leaf shape:** ovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches  
**Leaf color:** purple or red; variegated  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** pink  
**Flower characteristic:** spring-flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** no fruit  
**Fruit length:** no fruit  
**Fruit cover:** no fruit  
**Fruit color:** no fruit  
**Fruit characteristic:** no fruit

## 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:** slightly alkaline; acidic; clay; sand; loam  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Soil salt tolerance:** poor  
**Plant spacing:** 6 to 12 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding  
**Pest resistance:** very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

## Use and Management

Growing best in shady locations, bugleweed will tolerate full sun in the northern end of its range as long as it can be provided with moist, but not soggy, fertile soil. It looks best

in small gardens or small spaces and in other enclosed areas where the tight foliage can cover the ground around or in front of small shrubs.

Available cultivars include: 'Multicoloris,' leaves mottled red, white, and yellow on green; 'Alba,' white flowers; 'Atropurpurea,' bronze foliage and blue flowers; 'Burgundy Glow,' new leaves bright burgundy-red, mature leaves cream/white and dark pink; 'Rubra,' rose flowers, more vigorous; 'Variegata,' grey-green leaves with cream markings.

Propagation is by division, rarely by seed.

Susceptible to nematodes on sandy soils.

## Design Considerations

The low-growing habit and small leaves of the bugleweed cover the ground in a thick, lush layer of green, perfect for filling in among other plants in the landscape. Simple forms and light green or smooth foliage of companion plants will highlight the rough, scrubby texture of the bugleweed foliage. Clumping plants with larger glossy leaves or strap-blade leaves would also contrast well with the matting, low-growing form. The mass of green works well with different flower colors, but bright and light colors will show the best compared to the dark green and purple-colored foliage. Simple small or medium size flowers will contrast with the tiny foliage without adding too much detail. Colors in the variegated foliage varieties are primarily warm colors, contrasting flowers would include blues and purples or a simple color palette can be used by repeating the same warm colors with yellow, pink, or red flowers in companion plants.

## Pests and Diseases

Crown rot can occur on soggy soils.