



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## *Zebrina pendula*<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

### 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

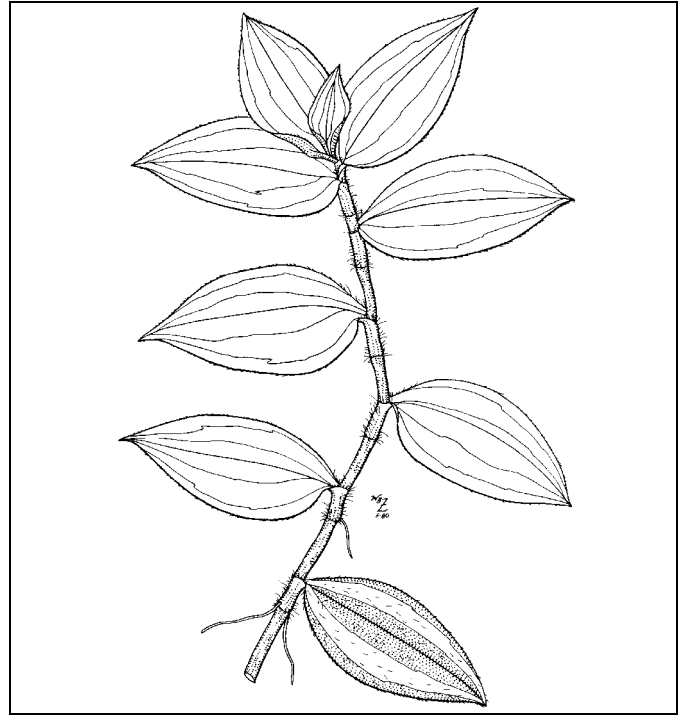


Figure 1. Wandering Jew.

### Description

**Height:** .5 to 1 feet

**Spread:** depends upon supporting structure

**Plant habit:** prostrate (flat); spreading

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** fine

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**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 occasionally bothered by mites.