

ECOLOGICAL GARDENS: BENEFITS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Ecological gardens benefit the environment in many ways, and are much more than simply letting your grass grow wild!



IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

Although ecological gardens have lower maintenance needs compared to turfgrass lawns, they still require upkeep and care, particularly when the new plants are establishing. For the first few months after initial planting, ecological gardens require consistent watering.

Removing invasive species and common garden weeds should also be done regularly to avoid competition with new plants and for safety reasons.

WHAT IS AN ECOLOGICAL GARDEN?

An ecological garden is a space designed primarily with native plants. These gardens provide a diverse mix of native grasses and flowering perennials that bloom from early spring and thrive until fall. Unlike conventional lawns, which use turfgrass, these gardens rely on plants well-suited to their local environment. This eliminates the need for synthetic chemicals and intensive maintenance.

Ecological gardens benefit the many insects and animals on our territory by providing them with food and a home. They also retain rainwater, which is good for the plants and keeps the ground from getting too dry or flooded.



ECOLOGICAL GARDEN IN BLOOM



UNKEPT PROPERTY

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ECOLOGICAL GARDENS

There is often confusion surrounding the difference between a neglected lawn and an ecological garden.

A neglected lawn is one that has been left unattended for some time and poses public safety concerns, including hindering the visibility triangle, as well as access to your property, fire hydrants and other services. These upkept lawns are often composed of invasive plants, whereas an ecological garden is a carefully and intentionally designed area that incorporates native plants and mimics natural ecosystems.

BENEFITS OF AN ECOLOGICAL GARDEN

Ecological gardens act as ecological corridors, defined as land areas that connect habitat fragments and allow for wildlife and insects to move between these spaces. Japanese steps, a type of ecological corridor, have been proven to be one of the biggest contributors to preserving biodiversity by reducing habitat fragmentation.

Ecological gardens provide insects and animals with access to food, water, and mates, increase available resources in an urban environment, and help populations thrive.



These gardens reduce the risk of flooding in houses and roads, while also helping to prevent heat islands in urban areas. Some ecological gardens even offer food, such as fruits and nuts, for people to enjoy!

When designing your ecological garden, put emphasis on choosing the right plants and locations, while also providing the garden with continuous care. This will ensure a thriving ecological garden that supports pollinators and fosters biodiversity.

MANAGING PERCEPTIONS OF ECOLOGICAL GARDENS

To combat misconceptions between ecological gardens and overgrown lawns, help educate your neighbours about their many benefits by:

- **Demonstrating property care and maintenance**
Upkeep your property, pathways, and garden.
- **Educating your community**
Explain the benefits of ecological gardens for pollinators, water conservation, and biodiversity.
- **Balancing aesthetics and function**
Combine structured elements, such as evergreens or hedges, with wildflower patches to appeal to neighbours.



Scan to learn more about the different types of ecological gardens and how to create your own.



<https://ptclr.ca/ecological-garden>