



Beautiful by Nature

Design Tips for Toronto Native Plant Gardens



Toronto's Native Garden Trend: Beauty with Benefits!

Increasingly, Toronto gardeners are turning to native plants - not just to support nature, but to create stunning, low-maintenance landscapes. With clever design choices, you get the best of everything: enjoy a garden that is beautiful, cost-effective, drought-resistant, and built to thrive in a changing climate.

Native Plant Garden Design Basics

Create a thriving, eco-friendly garden with at least **75% native plants!**

Choose a **formal** (structured, geometric) or **informal** (flowing, natural) style, and use design tricks like **framing and focal points** for a polished look.

Embrace a new aesthetic – more layers (groundcover, perennials, shrubs, trees), less lawn, and a deeper appreciation for texture and structure.

Plant in clusters of 3–5 for vibrant pollinator habitats.

Start small—transform one section at a time or go simple with a native tree + understory planting. Your garden, your pace!



Framing Makes all the Difference!

A strong, formal frame gives your native garden structure and focus. This classic design technique is especially powerful in native gardens.

Use elements like fencing, paths, walls, hedges, or trellises to define your space and highlight your plants.

Focal Points: Essential for Impact

A focal point adds depth and interest to your native garden—whether it's a sculpture, birdbath, tree, accent plant, rock, or even a log. The possibilities are endless, and your choice can reflect any style, from modern to traditional, formal to informal. Make your garden truly stand out!



Colour that Lasts All Year

Native plants are a hidden gem for vibrant, seasonal colour. With a wide range of hues, you can design for year-round impact and amplify the effect with mass plantings. Remember – brown is a colour too! Especially in autumn and winter, after the colourful flowers have faded. Brown seedheads look beautiful against snow and feed hungry birds.



Less Lawn, More Pathways

Assess how much lawn you truly need. Ecologist Doug Tallamy suggests cutting lawn areas by at least 50% to make room for more nature-friendly spaces. Swap some of that lawn for pathways and diverse plantings to enhance your garden's beauty and ecological value.



Layers & Borders for Biodiversity

Create a thriving wildlife haven by incorporating multiple layers—groundcover, perennials, shrubs, and trees. These layers provide food and habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Add hedges and borders to form vital wildlife corridors, supporting migration and enhancing habitat. Whether formal or informal, your design will nurture biodiversity.



Appreciating Texture & Structure

In native gardens, texture and structure play a vital role in creating a visually stunning landscape. Combining plants with contrasting and complementary textures brings out the beauty in your design, creating a harmonious visual balance that delights the eye and elevates the overall aesthetic – a true display of thoughtful garden design.



Native Plant Gardeners Work *with* Nature.

Your garden becomes a sanctuary that combats climate change, nurtures wildlife, and enhances your space with lasting beauty.



Learn More

thegardencluboftoronto.ca
projectswallowtail.ca
toronto.ca/wildbees
toronto.ca/nativeplants