

## Restoring the Don: Species Selection

By John Routh

The mandate of the Task Force to Bring Back the Don is to make the valley “clean, green, and accessible”. Implementing the ‘green’ part means that the Task Force is involved in restoration projects to create a more natural environment.

Over the past 12 years, we have planted trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants at over 25 sites. Based on ecological restoration principles we only use species that are native to the Toronto region and wherever possible use stock grown from local seed sources. “Native” in this context refers to species that were known to exist in the Toronto region before the advent of European activity.

We select plant species based on several criteria:

Criteria	Description
Hardiness	The species can withstand harsh conditions such as poor soil and drought.
Availability	Local nurseries can provide the species. Do the nurseries use local seed stock?
Affordability	The species can be purchased in sufficient numbers at a reasonable cost.
Local site conditions	Site specific conditions may alter or limit species selection. For example sites near houses limit use of understory species due to safety concerns. Sites beneath hydro wires cannot include trees that grow more than 10 metres tall. Sites beside roads cannot interfere with line of sight for motorists.

All of our projects are done in cooperation with the City of Toronto and in some cases the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). The city department responsible for these projects is the Natural Environment and Horticulture Section (NEHS) of the Parks and Recreation Division.

The following is a summary of some of the species that were used on projects in the Don Valley area in 2001 and 2002. Project sites range from wetland to meadow to forest. Therefore species are chosen that best fit the unique conditions of each site.

Type	Scientific Name	Common Name
Fern	<i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	marginal wood fern
	<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>	ostrich fern
	<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>	sensitive fern
	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Christmas fern
Grass	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	big bluestem
	<i>Bromus ciliatus</i>	fringed brome
	<i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i>	Canada blue joint
	<i>Elymus canadensis</i>	Canada wild rye
Sedge	<i>Carex merritt-fernaldii</i>	Fernald's sedge
	<i>Carex plantaginea</i>	Plantain-leaved sedge
	<i>Carex vaginata</i>	smooth sheathed sedge
	<i>Carex bebbii</i>	Bebb's sedge
Shrub	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Saskatoon berry
	<i>Amelanchier laevis</i>	Smooth serviceberry
	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Buttonbush
	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	alternate leaved dogwood
	<i>Cornus racemosa</i>	grey dogwood
	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	red osier dogwood
	<i>Diervilla lonicera</i>	bush honeysuckle
	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Spicebush
	<i>Rosa Carolina</i>	pasture rose
	<i>Rubus idaeus var. strigosus</i>	red raspberry
	<i>Rubus odoratus</i>	flowering raspberry
	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	common elderberry
	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	nannyberry
	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	highbush cranberry
Tree	<i>Acer saccharinum</i>	silver maple
	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	sugar maple
	<i>Acer spicatum</i>	mountain maple
	<i>Alnus rugosa</i>	speckled alder
	<i>Betula alleghaniensis</i>	yellow birch
	<i>Crataegus mollis</i>	downy hawthorn
	<i>Fraxinus nigra</i>	black ash
	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	green ash
	<i>Pinus strobes</i>	white pine
	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	sycamore
	<i>Populus deltoides</i>	cottonwood
	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>	trembling aspen
	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	black cherry

	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	choke cherry
	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	bur oak
	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	red oak
	<i>Salix amygdaloides</i>	peachleaf willow
	<i>Salix nigra</i>	black willow
	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	eastern white cedar
	<i>Tilia Americana</i>	basswood
Wildflower	<i>Actaea pachypoda</i>	white baneberry
	<i>Actaea rubra</i>	red baneberry
	<i>Acorus calamus</i>	sweet flag
	<i>Alisma plantago-aquatica</i>	water plantain
	<i>Apocynum androsaemifolium</i>	spreading dogbane
	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	milkweed
	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	butterfly weed
	<i>Aster ericoides</i>	heath aster
	<i>Aster laevis</i>	smooth aster
	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	New England aster
	<i>Aster umbellatus</i>	flat-topped white aster
	<i>Caltha palustris</i>	marsh marigold
	<i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i>	blue cohosh
	<i>Chelone glabra</i>	white turtlehead
	<i>Desmodium canadense</i>	showy tick-trefoil
	<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>	Joe-Pye weed
	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	boneset
	<i>Iris versicolor</i>	northern blue-flag iris
	<i>Lobelia siphilitica</i>	great blue lobelia
	<i>Lupinus perennis</i>	Lupine
	<i>Nymphaea odoratum</i>	white water lily
	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	black-eyed susan
	<i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i>	Green headed coneflower
	<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	arrowhead
	<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	False Solomon's-seal
	<i>Solidago bicolor</i>	silverrod
	<i>Solidago caesia</i>	bluestemmed goldenrod
	<i>Spiraea alba</i>	meadowsweet
	<i>Symplocarpus foetidus</i>	Skunk cabbage
	<i>Viola pubescens</i>	downy yellow violet