



What qualifies as a Natural Garden?

A natural garden is a garden designed to have environmental benefits and may create a habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife. It is managed within a certain boundary and may contain both native and non-native plants. Unlike neglected properties, a natural garden will be in line with Chapter 489, Grass and Weeds, Section 2, and will not contain overgrown plants or invasive weeds, as explained in the by-law below:

489 - 2. Maximum height

- A. The owner or occupant of private land shall cut the grass and weeds on their land and remove the cuttings whenever the growth of grass and weeds exceeds 20 centimeters in height.
- B. For the purposes of this section, the term “grass and weeds” refers to:
 - (1) All noxious weeds and local weeds designated under the *Weed Control Act*, and
 - (2) Any other vegetation growth which does not form part of a natural garden that has been deliberately implemented to produce ground cover, including one or more species of wildflowers, shrubs, perennials, grasses, or combinations of them, whether native or non-native, consistent with a managed and natural landscape, other than regularly mown grass.

Requests to remove specific noxious weeds may be issued under the following criteria:

- if the plant threatens a person’s health (e.g.: ragweed, poison ivy, poison sumac, etc.)
- if the plant threatens Toronto's native plant communities in ravines and parks (e.g.: invasive weeds such as Dog Strangling Vine, Purple Loosestrife, Garlic Mustard, European Buckthorn, etc.)
- if the plant poses a potential safety hazard (e.g.: plants blocking sightline of traffic; and irritants such as stinging nettle or thorny plants that could affect passersby.

For more information, visit:

- www.toronto.ca/health/pesticides/pdf/gardening_lawnalternatives.pdf
- [www.toronto.ca/trees/pdfs/Fact 3 Controlling Invasive Plants.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/trees/pdfs/Fact_3_Controling_Invasive_Plants.pdf)
- www.toronto.ca/health/pesticides/go_natural_factsheets.htm
- www.toronto.ca/watereff/tips/xeriscaping.htm#xeric
- www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_489.pdf

If a property owner would like to apply for a Natural Garden exemption, a property owner can complete the Natural Gardens Exemption application form and submit it by mail or in-person to any of the ML&S District Offices. More information is available online at www.toronto.ca/naturalgardens or through 311:

Phone within Toronto: 311
Phone outside city: 416-392-CITY (2489)
TTY customers: 416-338-0TTY (0889)

Website: www.toronto.ca/311
Email: 311@toronto.ca
Fax: 416-338-0685

Common Invasive Plants and some Recommended Alternative Plants for Your Garden

Common Invasive Plants

Ragweed



Recommended Alternative Plants

Monarda (Bergamot, Bee balm)



Dog Strangling Vine



Rudbeckia



Common Invasive Plants

Garlic Mustard



Rosette stage



Recommended Alternative Plants

Foamflower (Tiarella)



Poison Ivy



Purple Coneflower



Common Invasive Plants

European Buckthorn



Recommended Alternative Plants

Serviceberry



Purple Loosestrife



Cardinal flower

