

A Habitat in my Backyard

FOR A FLOURISHING URBAN ECOSYSTEM:
I AM DEDICATED TO CONSERVING
BIODIVERSITY IN MY CITY!



CORRIDOR
ÉCOLOGIQUE
DARLINGTON

Practical Guide

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CORRIDOR ÉCOLOGIQUE DARLINGTON

Projects by, for and with the community



Mission



Ecological corridors connect green spaces to encourage wildlife movement and preserve **biodiversity** in urban environments. In the desire to bring a new vision to the city, and to **improve** the **living environment** of the borough's **residents**, ecological corridors aim to **prepare** cities to **climate change's impacts**.

Benefits for the Population



The Darlington ecological corridor contributes to **food security** in the neighbourhood while creating **friendly spaces** for residents to enjoy nature. It is also known to reduce **heat islands**, improve **air quality** and increase the **sense of security** in the city.

Our Impact



- We planted a **microforest**
- We raised awareness among hundreds of citizens through **educational workshops and conferences**
- We planted three **food forests**
- We installed around 40 **giant flower pots** to **feed residents, beautify** the neighbourhood and **retain rainwater**

A Habitat in my Backyard



Balcony Garden, Toronto, Ontario © Ryan Godfrey / WWF-Canada

Whether you have access to a **balcony** or a **yard**, you can help create **habitats** in your living spaces. They will serve as much needed **refuge** for **wildlife** and **pollinators**. This program will give you ideas and tools to transform your outdoor space into a thriving ecosystem! To **get involved** in biodiversity conservation, send us an e-mail at

habitat.dans.ma.cour@outlook.com

Pro Tip #1

You can collect stones and branches found in your neighbourhood and turn them into a **natural arrangement** like the one in the image below. Many animals and pollinators use these elements for shelter and to survive the winter. You can also add a bowl of water with rocks at the bottom so wildlife and pollinators can drink from it.

Pro Tip #2

You can **limit lawn mowing**, especially during the month of May, when pollinators have too few sources of food. Opt instead for non-grass landscaping, which in any case requires less maintenance and water in the long term. For more information, visit <https://montreal.ca/articles/la-gestion-differenciee-rdp-pat-48661>

Pro Tip #3

Don't collect dead leaves on your property. Throwing them away or composting them in the fall kills thousands of animals and pollinators. If you must move the dead leaves out of the way, you can pile them up delicately in a less busy corner of your yard, such as under trees or under the balcony.



Shawn McKnight



Gevel B. Jardins naturels durables, Inc.

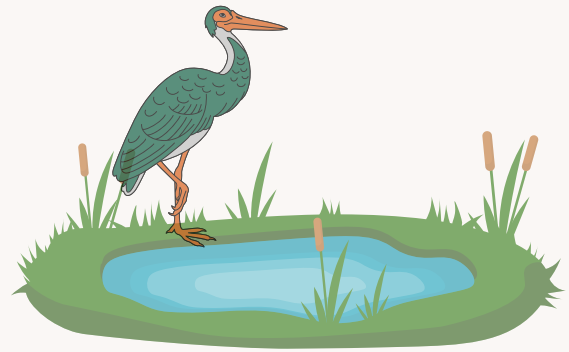


Xerces Society / Matthew Shepard

Why Protect Urban Fauna and Flora?

Biodiversity Loss

Since 1970, there has been a **69% decline** in global **animal populations** (Almond et al., 2022).



Urban Sprawl

As large **urban centres encroach** on the last remaining **natural habitats**, the decline in biodiversity continues. We need to find a way to **include wildlife** in our **living spaces**.

Ecosystem Services

Among other things, our **native pollinators** such as flies, bees, butterflies and even wasps give us **access** to fresh **fruits** and **vegetables**. These insects carry pollen from one flower to another, enabling plants to reproduce.



LONG LIVE BIODIVERSITY!

Good Practices in my Yard

1 I don't use pesticides

Chemical agents used to control "pest" plants and animals have devastating effects on the environment. The era of perfect lawns is over, and it's time to learn to live with native species such as dandelions!

2 I plant native flowers

By planting native flowers, you ensure that you don't introduce invasive exotic plants that can decimate native plant and animal populations. What's more, you'll be providing valuable food for local pollinators!

3 I don't relocate wildlife

According to a 2004 study by Adams et al., 97% of squirrels that had been relocated in a forest disappeared or died within 88 days. In spring, you risk killing the babies if you accidentally move a mother. Contact the Montreal SPCA if you have any questions about wildlife.

4 I create habitats

Arrange several natural areas in your yard or on your balcony that won't be disturbed by mowing or trampling. This creates a refuge for flora and fauna in both summer and winter.

5 I don't feed wildlife

And yes, that includes bird feeders too. Unfortunately, many species contract contagious and sometimes fatal diseases when feeders aren't properly cleaned regularly. They also attract other wildlife, which can create conflicts with them.

6 I limit light pollution

Many species evolve in the dark and are disturbed by light pollution. It's best to opt for lighting systems with motion sensors, or to turn off outdoor lights at night if possible.

7 I use recycled or natural materials

Consider visiting second-hand stores or recycling materials you already have when landscaping your yard or balcony.

8 I share my knowledge

Become an ambassador for biodiversity by sharing the knowledge you've acquired with your friends and family, your landlords and your neighbours.



Exotic Invasive Species

Exotic invasive plants have been intentionally or unintentionally introduced to a territory, and they **dominate** our urban, rural and forest landscapes in terms of surface area or numbers. Their dominance often **threatens species native** to Quebec, and they have significant negative **economic consequences**. The following pages present some invasive plants observed in the Côte-des-Neiges District in 2024.



Garlic Mustard

This plant is a member of the cabbage family, it smells like garlic and you can make pesto with it. Be sure to identify it with a guide before eating it! To get rid of it, you can pull it out manually several years in a row.



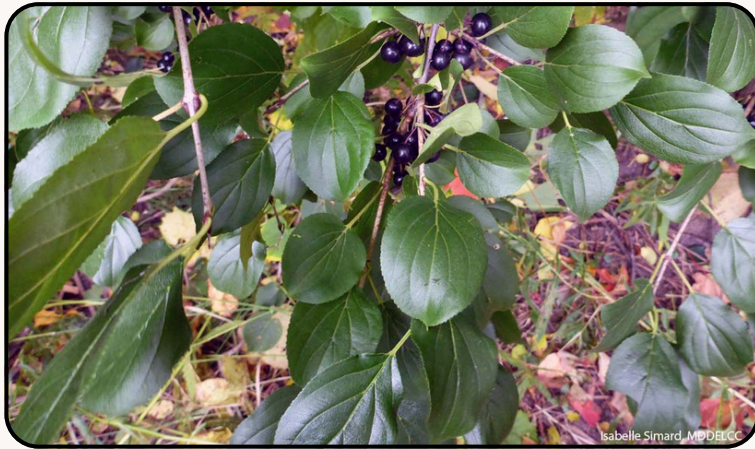
Wild Chervil

This plant can usually be found in open areas where it can grow up to 1.5 metres high. You can pull it out manually and plant native species on top to block the sun's rays.



Smooth Bedstraw

This species spreads underground and by producing seeds, so you should uproot it as much as possible. Like most plants, you can limit its growth by setting up other native flowers in the same area.



European Buckthorn

This species of buckthorn produces substances that prevent other plants from surviving in its vicinity. You can cut this shrub and encapsulate it in a bag for optimal results.



Lesser Periwinkle

Originally used as a horticultural species, this little plant has a nasty habit of spreading everywhere and preventing native plants from surviving. To get rid of it, you can hand pull it several years in a row.



Manitoba Maple

This species of maple spreads abundantly due to the numerous samaras it produces. You can cut it or girdle it to eliminate it.

You can **dispose** of invasive exotic plants in the **trash**; otherwise they may **spread** if used as mulch or compost. One of the best ways to control these species is to **plant native flowers** on top of them after cutting or pulling them out, so that they can monopolize the environmental resources and eventually eliminate the unwanted species. It's important to **add ground cover plants** in the area where you've controlled invasive species to provide shelter and food for urban wildlife. Above all, when gardening, ensure with the **nursery staff** that you are not accidentally introducing invasive plants in the area.

Some Native Species to Grow

According to a 2013 study by Morandin and Kremen, **77% of local bees feed solely on native plants.** Most of them need **access to many native flowers** nearby to survive. So here are a few native species you can plant in your yard or on your balcony to help pollinators.



Achillea millefolium

Light requirement : Sun, part shade

Ht : 60 cm

Lg : 45 cm

Flower : White, June - September

Info: Can tolerate dry soil



Lilium canadense

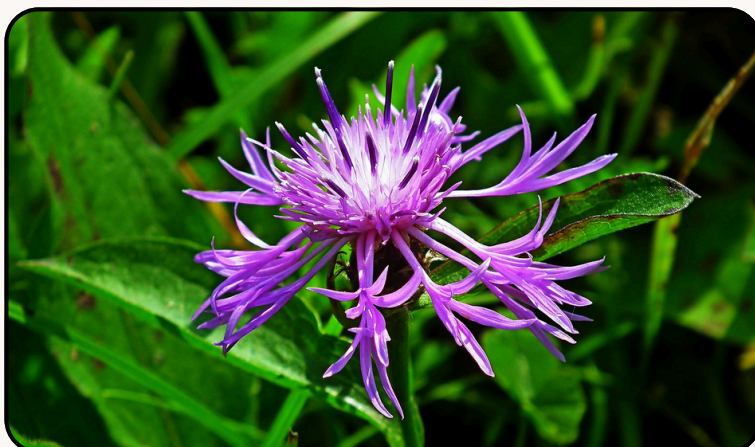
Light requirement : Sun, part shade

Ht : 125 cm

Lg : 45 cm

Flower : Orange, July

Info : Grows in moist soil



Monarda fistulosa

Light requirement : Sun

Ht : 60-90 cm

Lg : 45 cm

Flower : Pink, June - August

Info : Can tolerate dry soil



Rudbeckia laciniata

Light requirement : Sun, part shade

Ht : 100-120 cm

Lg : 60 cm

Flower : Yellow, July - September

Info : Grows in moist soil



Smilacina stellata

Light requirement : Shade, part shade

Ht : 30-60 cm

Lg : 30 - 60 cm

Flower : White, May - June

Info : Grows in dry soil



Smilacina racemosa

Light requirement : Shade, part shade

Ht : 30-60 cm

Lg : 30 - 60 cm

Flower : White, May - June

Info : Grows in fertile, moist soil



Aster novae-angliae

Light requirement : Sun, part shade

Ht : 90 cm

Lg : 60 cm

Flower : Violet, August - October

Info : Grows in dry soil



Campanula rotundifolia

Light requirement : Sun, part shade

Ht : 30 cm

Lg : 30 cm

Flower : White, June - September

Info : Grows in dry soil



Anaphalis margaritacea

Light requirement : Sun, part shade

Ht : 50 cm

Lg : 50 cm

Flower : White, July - August

Info : Grows in dry soil



Asclepias syriaca

Light requirement : Sun

Ht : 90 - 150 cm

Lg : 40 cm

Flower : Pink, July - August

Info : Grows in dry soil



Symphyotrichum cordifolium

Light requirement : Sun, part shade

Ht : 30 - 100 cm

Lg : 40 cm

Flower : Blue, July - October

Info : Grows in moist soil

Resources

If you'd like to learn more about any of the following, check out these informative websites!



Exotic invasive species:

<https://www.environnement.gouv.qc.ca/biodiversite/especes-exotiques-envahissantes/sentinelle.htm>



Living with wildlife:

<https://www.sPCA.com/services/animaux-de-la-faune/>



Native flowers provider:

<https://akene.ca/collections/semences-plantes-indigenes>

Sources

Don't hesitate to consult these fascinating studies and books!

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