



# Flowers in the Front Yard.ca

English Cottage Gardens designed, installed & maintained.  
An eco-friendly, organic, sustainable alternative to the front lawn.

## The Sustainable Garden

### Sustainability Quotes:

#### **Organic**

Urbanites act as if organic food is something new, when in fact, factory farming is new. Organic farming has been in practice for thousands of years and what we now call traditional farming is merely an outgrowth of the industrial age and biochemical revolution of the 20th century.

- <http://www.sustainable-gardening.com>

#### **Sustainable philosophy**

- Reuse and recycle wherever possible.
- Avoid products which require toxic or hazardous substances in their manufacture or use.
- Take a holistic view of the environmental impact of products, from cradle to grave.
- Favour local over international, transportation by sea over transportation by air.
- Actively promote sustainable gardening practices.

- <http://www.henandhammock.co.uk/>

#### **Waste**

Everything is recycled in natural systems, there is no such thing as waste. Humans created waste because we insisted on ignoring the natural systems upon which we depend. We have been so adept at doing so that we now take waste for granted and have given the word a prominent place in our vocabulary. We have kitchen waste, garden waste, agricultural waste, municipal waste, nuclear-waste, and on and on. Yet, our long term survival requires that we learn to live in harmony with our host planet. This also requires that we understand natural cycles and incorporate them into our day to day lives. In essence, this means that we must attempt to eliminate waste altogether. From our living habits, and from our vocabulary.

- *Joseph Jenkins, Adapted From "The Manure Handbook", 2005 .*

### Can we make a profit and move towards sustainability?

It seems a bit odd to be talking to horticultural firms about going 'green', after all we work with plants! But we know that along with agriculture – some of the worse environmental practices have been perpetrated in this field. More consumers are asking for green products, and sustainable practices, and this trend will only continue to expand, as more companies and growers change their practices to match consumer demands.

'Going green' is not just for good public relations, but is also an economically beneficial strategy. Innovative landscape and other horticultural firms have a tremendous opportunity to position themselves as "green," and dramatically increase their business. It must be done with integrity though – don't just green-wash your current practices. The public is getting more educated and cynical, they will be asking



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the hard questions and you better have good answers.

## **Opportunities in sustainable green horticultural businesses:**

### **Edible Landscapes**

The **Garden Writers Association Foundation (GWAF)** recently released a 2010 trends survey that showed "more than one-third of the households surveyed reported plans to increase their edible gardens." Why?...Cost, interest in fresh, local food sources, concern with food safety, environmental issues, and even a return to food as a social connection. More and more, raised beds are replacing those neat, sterile lawns. Vegetables and other edible landscaping is taking over the summer landscape.

While the general nursery industry is has been in the dumps, not all is gloom. Nurseries that specialized in edibles — vegetables, fruit trees and berries — didn't fall as far thanks to the interest in grow-your-own food."

– <http://www.sustainablehort.com/>

### **Wildlife habitats**

More of my clients are now asking for butterfly and bird attracting plants. Many of them also like the idea of having a "natural" pond to attract even more wild life such as toads and frogs.

### **Bio-remediation Bio-swales**

Commercially there is more and more demand for controlling storm water run off in a more environmentally friendly way. Bio-swales are basically miniature wetlands. They capture water running from hard surfaces (streets, parking lots, etc.) and then slow and disperse it so that much of infiltrates into the soil. Capturing water both lessens the strain on the city's drainage system, and reduces later watering needs. There are now landscape professionals specializing in this area – but there is a lot more room for new players.

### **Rain gardens**

For the residential client the equivalent is a rain garden. Directing the runoff from roofs and other hard surfaces to an specially prepared portion of the property which is then planted with moisture loving plants.

### **Green roofs and Green envelopes**

The green roof concept is quickly expanding into a "green envelope," where the entire building is covered in plants.

### **Native plants**

Encouraging the use of native plants. Using plants well suited to the environment in which they are to be planted removes much of the need for artificial support such as fertilizers, watering etc.



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## Local examples:

### Horticultural businesses moving toward sustainability – profitably!

**Lawn Savers** – A local Toronto firm offering Biological controls and organic lawn care.  
(for those that must have a lawn) <http://lawnsavers.com/>

**Wildflower Farm** – Located in Orangeville Ontario, offering no-mow Lawn seed and wild flower seed.  
<http://www.wildflowerfarm.com/>

**Green Gardeners** – A local Toronto Firm offering ecological, organic gardening and landscaping they even do it by bicycle! <http://greengardeners.ca/>

**The Cottage Gardener** – Located just west of Port Hope, Ontario offering organically grown Rare and heirloom plant seed. <http://cottagegardener.com>

**Green Space Roofing** – Green roofs and planted wall systems. <http://www.greenspaceroofing.com>

**ELT Easy Green™ Living Wall Systems**, Brantford, Ontario, Canada

**Native plants in Claremont** – Located in my home town, offering native southern Ontario plants, their biggest clients are government agencies working toward more sustainable reclamation of disturbed landscapes. <http://www.nativeplants.ca/>

**Cow Pots** – Are in Connecticut but their products are available now here in Canada. They are offering the sustainable alternative to peat pots. Pressed cow manure. <http://www.cowpots.com/>

**Flowers in the Front Yard** – Providing more sustainable alternatives to the Lawn.  
<Http://www.flowersinthefrontyard.ca>

## References and Resources:

Masanobu Fukuoka; Do Nothing Farming

Bill Mollison; Permaculture Movement; In Grave Danger of Falling Food video:  
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3162503821561656641&hl=en#>

Patricia Lanza; Lasagna Gardening <http://www.lasagnagardening.com/about.html>

Ruth Stout; Permanent mulch system: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/Organic-Gardening/2004-02-01/Ruth-Stouts-System.aspx>

Geoff Lawton; permaculture consultant, designer and teacher:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWayqR9Rrys>

Mountain top coal mining; <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN0719066720100107>

Compounds in Gasoline; <http://www.elmhurst.edu/~chm/vchembook/515gasolinefs.html>



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MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET for Gasoline; <http://firstfuelbank.com/msds/Tesoro.pdf>

An Inconvenient Truth Trailer; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnjx6KETmi4>

Leaf use; <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/homelandscape/dontbag/dontbag.html>

GWAF survey; [www.gardenwriters.org](http://www.gardenwriters.org)

## **Can Nurseries be Sustainable? - Resources and support:**

<http://www.kwantlen.ca/ish.html>

<http://www.sustainablehorticulture.com/>

<http://www.thesustainabilityinitiative.com/>

<http://www.ecojustice.ca/>

<http://www.sustainablehort.com/>

<http://www.sustainable-gardening.com/blog>

<http://www.thenaturalgardener.co.uk/> -Biodegradable Coir Pots

<http://www.livingwallart.com/>

<http://www.amazingdaylight.com/>

<http://www.envirobond.com/>

<http://rainbarrel.ca/>

<http://www.solatube.com/>