

Proposed Ground Cover Maintenance and Prohibited Plants Bylaw

Proposal to Repeal and
Replace Grass and Weed
Cutting By-law 166-2011

Committee of Council
March 19, 2025



Introduction

- Across Canada, people are turning to naturalized gardens as a way to mitigate the impacts of climate change and habitat and biodiversity loss.
- Sometimes referred to as pollinator gardens, habitat gardens, rain gardens, meadows, collectively referred to as “naturalized gardens”



Naturalized Gardens

Benefits of naturalized gardens:

- Provide food, shelter, and water to wildlife
- Restore native habitats that have been diminished as a result of urbanization
- Create and improve pollinator habitats, supporting the mission of Bee City Canada
- Require less maintenance which results in:
 - Conservation of water and soil
 - Less pesticides and fertilizers being released into the environment
 - Reduced need for fossil fuels (ex. Gasoline or electricity required for a lawn mower)



Background

Brampton 2040 Vision

Vision 1 (Sustainability and the Environment): “In 2040, Brampton will be a mosaic of sustainable urban places, sitting within an interconnected green park network, with its people as environmental stewards – targeting ‘one-planet’ living”

Brampton Plan

3.2.5.6 The use of green infrastructure will be encouraged to improve ecosystem connectivity, provide habitat, and improve biodiversity through approaches such as green roofs, urban forest enhancements, urban agriculture, rain gardens, pollinator gardens, meadows and naturalized front and backyards.

Brampton Grow Green Environmental Master Plan

Action: review and update the City by-laws to ensure they do not restrict designed naturalization efforts on public and private lands.



Brampton Eco Park Strategy

Action: developing a plan to integrate Eco Park principles into residential and private properties

Natural Heritage Restoration Program

Increase pollinator habitat and educate residents on the value and biological imperative of conserving pollinator wildlife species

Bee City Canada

All program participants must commit to creating, maintaining and improving pollinator habitat

Climate Change

Brampton's first Climate Change Adaptation Plan is in progress and will have pollinator supporting actions.



Artwork by Marton Zsoldos

Current Situation

- Since 1995, Ontario courts have ruled in various cases that individuals' rights to freedom of expression, as protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, extend to the expression of environmental values and relationships to nature through gardening practices.
- Completed a review of Grass and Weed Cutting By-law 166-2011
- Assessment of related Brampton by-laws: Property Standards By-law, Boulevard Maintenance & Highway Obstruction By-law, and the proposed new Encroachment By-law
- Review also included recently updated Yard Maintenance By-laws from other municipalities in the GTA and Ontario, including the Cities of Toronto, Ottawa, Guelph, Mississauga and Barrie



Outcome: current Grass and Weed Cutting By-law is outdated, unclear, and does not align with current City plans, policies and practices related to biodiversity.

Key Proposed Changes

Staff collaborated to draft a **Ground Cover Maintenance and Prohibited Plants By-law** to:

1. Introduce the term “prohibited plants” to replace the use of the ambiguous term “weed”, and add a list of prohibited plants;
2. Distinguish “gardens” from “ground cover” (e.g. turf grass/lawn);
3. Modernize and update provisions regarding the maintenance of gardens and ground cover;
4. Update by-law title to “**Ground Cover Maintenance and Prohibited Plants By-law**”;
5. Align with the proposed new Encroachment By-law; and
6. Support continued enforcement of excessive growth violations by amending the Administrative Penalties (Non-Parking) By-law 218-2019 to establish new graduated penalties for non-compliance with escalating penalties for repeat violations. The penalty amount for first time offences is not changing from the currently established penalty under the current Grass and Weed Cutting By-law 116-2011 (\$250).

PROHIBITED PLANTS

- The current bylaw uses the Weed Control Act to define noxious weeds. Currently, there are twenty-five weeds classified by the Weed Control Act
- The bylaw update also includes a list of invasive and noxious species that are specific to the City of Brampton, such as Garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, Phragmites, Oriental Bittersweet, Yellow floatingheart and Dog-strangling vine



Garlic Mustard



Japanese Knotweed



Phragmites



Dog Strangling Vine

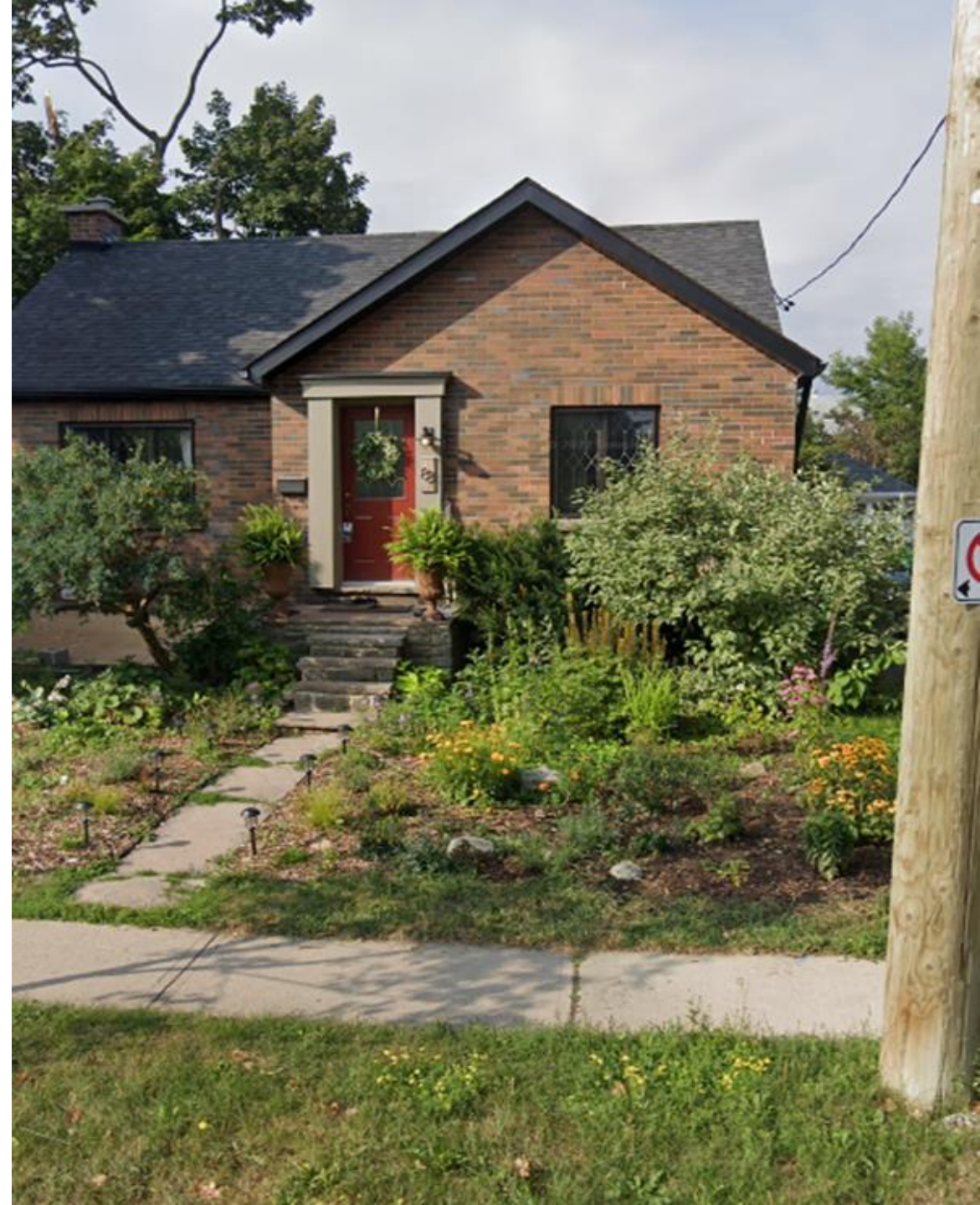
MAINTENANCE OF PREMISES

- The current bylaw states that every owner shall cut the grass and weeds on their Premises and remove the cuttings whenever the growth of grass or weeds exceeds twenty centimetres (20 cm) in height.
- The bylaw update states that every Owner or Occupant shall:
 - maintain all Ground Cover on Private Property to ensure it does not exceed a height of twenty centimetres (20 cm),
 - be permitted to maintain gardens for aesthetic value or native habitat provided they are not unreasonably overgrown or cause potential adverse safety effects on something or someone,
 - ensure gardens planted on Private Property shall not affect the safety, visibility, or passage of the general public and not encroach or obstruct sidewalk or roadway traffic or driver/pedestrian sight lines or adjacent property,
 - not permit Prohibited Plants



Recommendations

- Approval of the proposal to repeal Weed and Grass Cutting By-law 166-2011
- Enactment of the proposed Ground Cover Maintenance and Prohibited Plants By-law
- Approval of the proposed amendments to the Administrative Penalties (Non-Parking) By-law 218-2019, as amended, to establish new graduated penalties for repeat violations



Benefits

- Align maintenance of yards on private property with current City policies, goals, practices and other by-laws
- Provide residents with more clarity on the maintenance of sustainable gardens including fusion, pollinator and naturalized
- Promote biodiversity and habitats for birds and pollinators
- Reduction of stormwater runoff from properties, reduced fertilizer use and decreased water use



The background image shows a city street scene. On the left, there is a bus stop shelter with a red roof and glass panels. The word "Wellington" is visible on the top of the shelter. Behind the bus stop, there is a large, multi-story building with a curved facade and many windows. To the right of the main building, there is a tall, narrow structure with a clock face near the top. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Thank you!

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