

The background of the entire page is a close-up photograph of lush green foliage. Large, textured leaves with prominent veins are the primary focus, many of which are covered in small, clear water droplets. In the upper right corner, there are small, delicate flowers with light purple and white petals. The overall lighting is soft and natural, creating a fresh and vibrant atmosphere.

Looks Good Enough
to Eat

**A Beginner's Guide
to Permaculture**

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Sean James Consulting & Design

Icons

Native



Rain garden candidate



Bird-friendly



Pollinator-friendly



Invasive

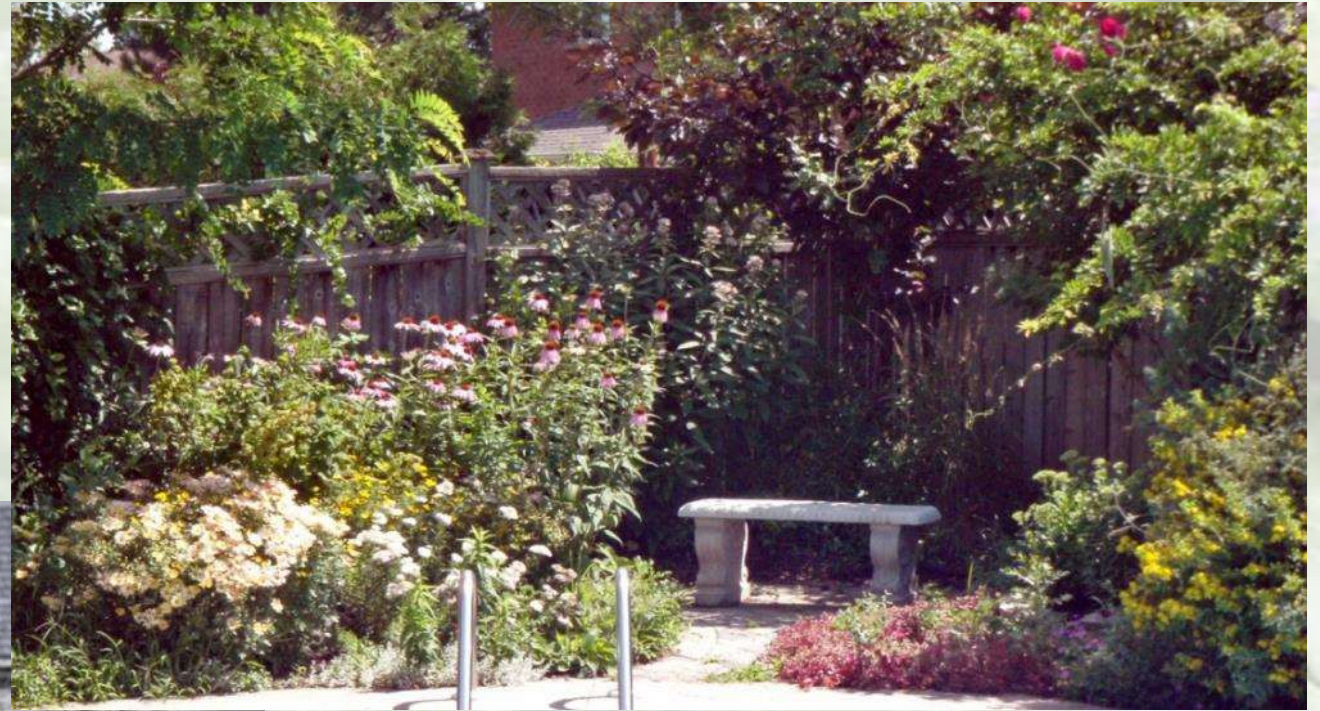


Drought-tolerant



Soil

Mycorrhizal fungi and
the soil food web



Mulching, Composting & 'Let-It-Lay', Biodynamic Accumulators & Minimum tillage.



“Let-It-Lay”

- A new term
- When doing spring cleanup (cleanup is best done in spring so beneficial insects have a home for the winter) instead of cleaning up every little bit, just cut down last year’s [perennial](#) growth in 7 – 10cm increments. Leave it where it falls, perhaps spreading it out a bit if it seems to thick.
- The hollow stems of some plants will become homes for a variety (variety = resilience!) of insects.
- A short YouTube Video? [Click here.](#) 😊
- As this material breaks down, it will slowly release nutrients to the soil and support the [soil microbiome](#).
- The bacteria in the soil is even [calming to humans!!!](#)

Working WITH Nature



- Insect & bird life
- Arthropods (many are 'mulchers' & more)
- Many pollinators are GREAT predators!





**Encourage pollinators.
30% of our food MUST
be pollinated. (By now
you probably know this!)
25-50% of pollination is
done by non-bee insects.
Beetles were the first
pollinators!**

**Permaculture:
You can still make
it PRETTY!**





Why draw from a complete palette? Add colour, biodiversity and 'hide' edibles from predators.

**Plant Partners:
Science-Based
Companion
Planting
Strategies for the
Vegetable Garden**

**by Jessica
Walliser from
Savvy Gardening**



Choosing Plants: Perennials

There ARE edibles that come back year after year.



Some edibles are ornamental and vice-versa.

- **Smoky Fennel and garlic!**



Opuntia AKA prickly pear cactus
Use a crème brûlée torch to deal with spines





**Sedum smoothies
rock! (Don't be
afraid to learn from
others!)**

Choosing Plants: Woody



Espaliered trees use vertical space without much footprint.



Fruit trees are good for pollinator support!

Ancient espaliers at Chateau Gruyere in Switzerland!



Choosing Plants: Natives



**Learn what's
edible. You might
be surprised.
(They also often
help the
environment.)**





**Choosing Plants: Nitrogen Fixers
(GREAT in rotation and as
companions...with exceptions.)**



Choosing Plants: Traditionals



Plant what you'll eat!

Sungold Tomatoes &
Cucamelons!

Thanks to [Niki
Jabbour](#) for these
recommendations!



Choosing Plants: Companions

Believe it or not, search Wikipedia for an excellent list of companion plantings and why's and why nots.





Sea Kale
Crambe maritima

- **edible flowers & leaves & GREAT for pollinators**

**Mixing
ornamentals and
edibles together
reduces the
'buffet effect'.**

**(Putting all edible together
in a veggie garden makes it
more convenient for pests.)**

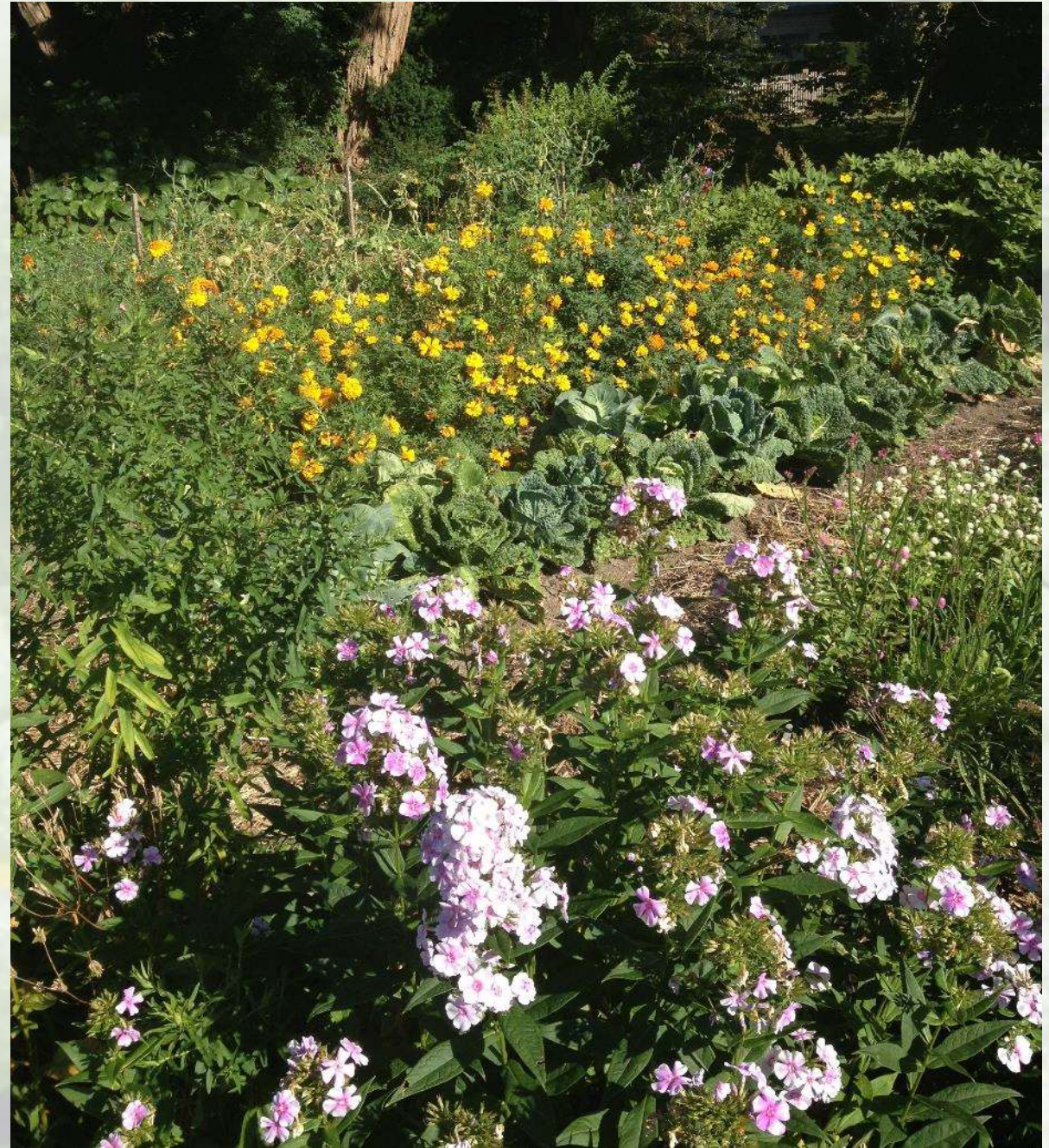




**Don't
forget the
obvious.**

Veggies are being used more and more, even in public settings.

Companion plants help with visuals and more. (Many folks are looking for cutting gardens – the garden does double-duty!)





**A very public
garden!
Queenston
Heights
Restaurant**

Tropicals, annuals and vegetables

(*Nasturtium*, Cardoon & Cabbage)




Cabbage, Kale and Lettuce







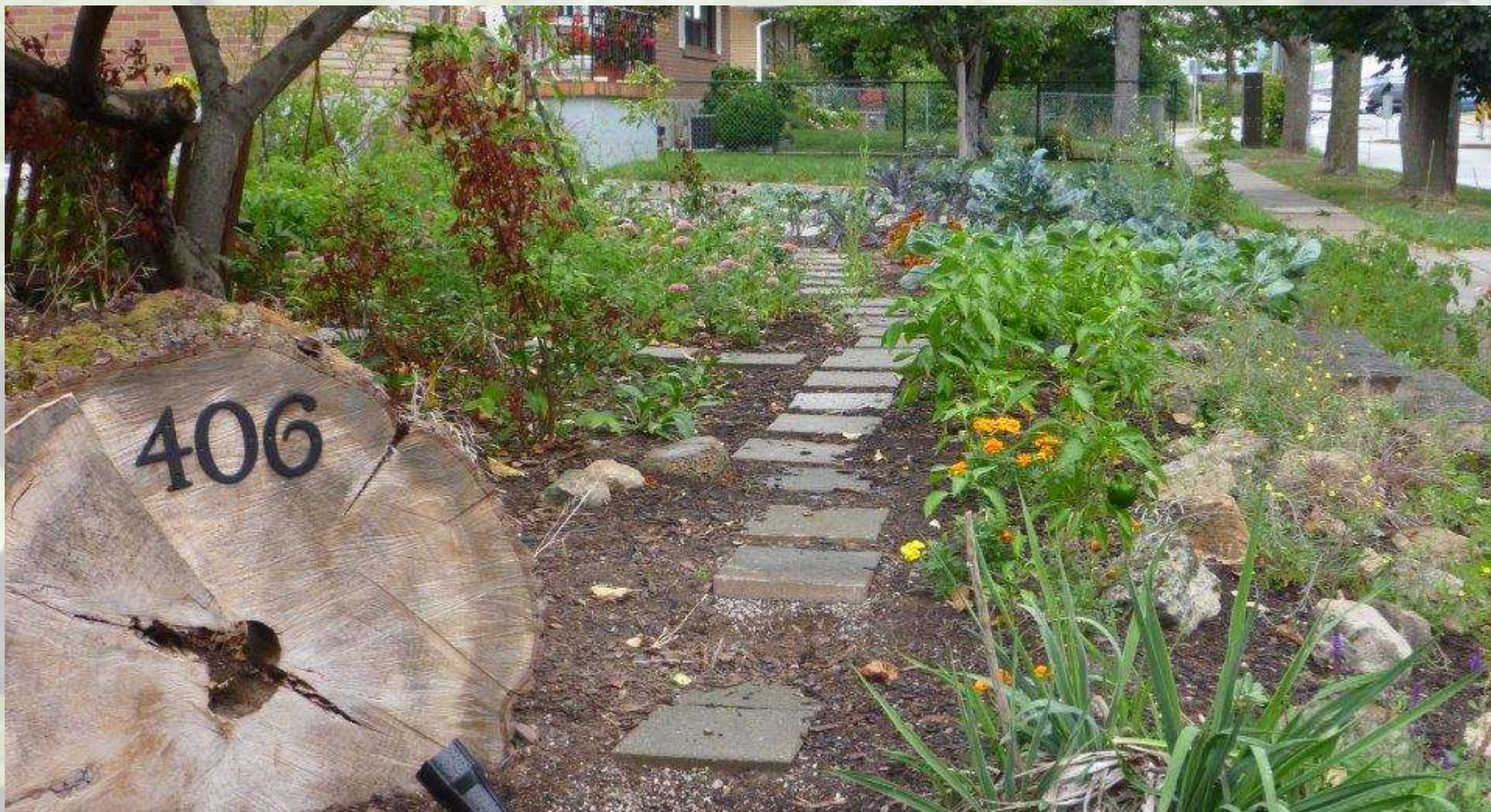
**Spadina House in Toronto: Great mixing of pretty and functional;
of pro-pollinator and edible**

The background of the image is a soft-focus photograph of green foliage. Large, textured leaves with prominent veins are visible, along with some small, light-colored flowers in the upper right corner. The overall color palette is a range of greens, from light lime to a slightly darker sage green, with a gentle, natural feel.

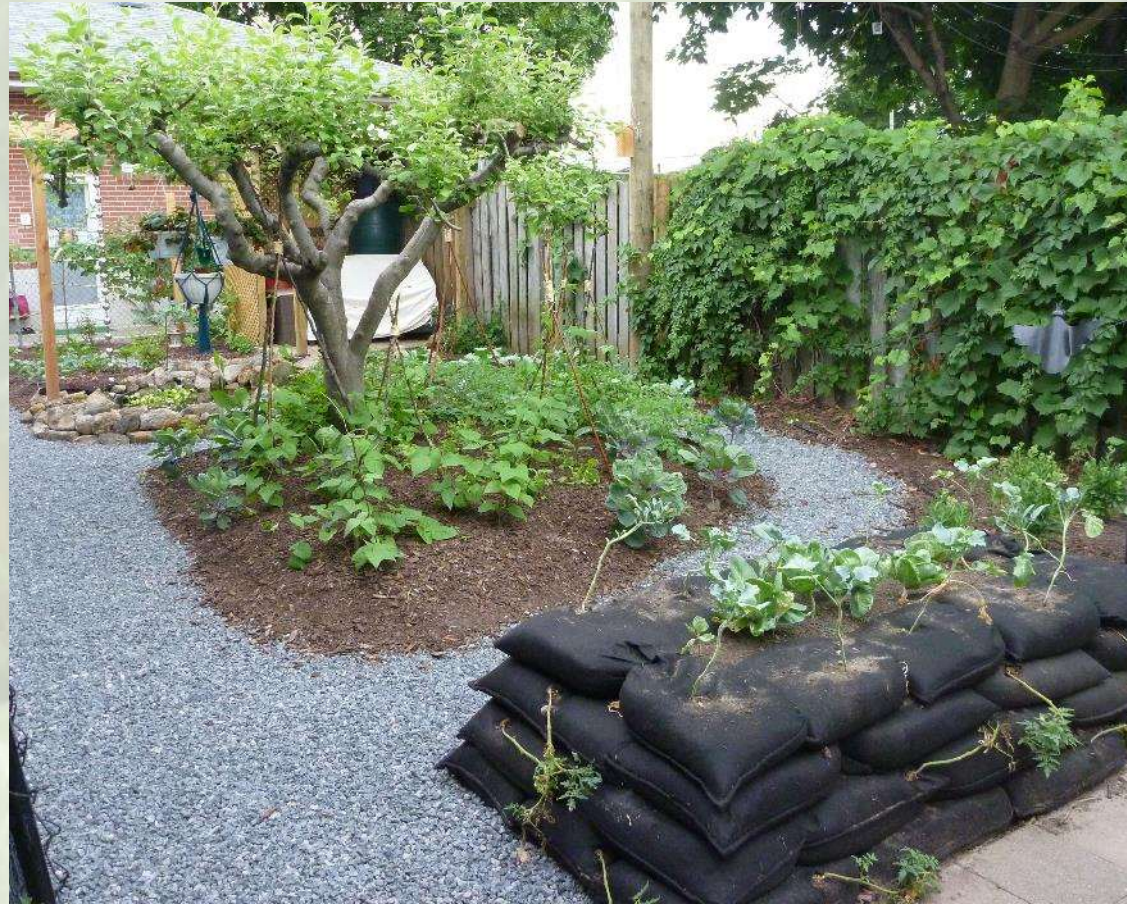
Permaculture should be about more than food. Do everything 'good' you can do! Help the soil, biodiversity, your pantry, reduce waste, use less water, capture rainwater on-site and more!



An all-edible landscape on sand soil in Oakville...



Envirolok bags: neat way to grow plants and make walls. Nothing comes out of a quarry. Also permeable pathways are great for the environment.



Planting on sandy soil means more frequent watering, and also that adding compost is even more important (& not just once! Every Year!!!).





**Look for the
colours in
more than
just the
flowers:**

**Leaves,
stems, seeds
and more.**

Flowers and texture? More plants are available as cultivars; different leaf colours are important.

- Tomatoes you know, but the red stuff? Red Pigweed or Amaranth!





Herbs and Greens with colourful foliage

Hardy Fuchsia (in Vancouver) growing in front of scarlet runner beans. **Do a bit of research. These beans are delicious when cooked...but poisonous when not cooked!**





**This
landscape is
all edible,
fermentable
or
medicinal.**



**Trends! (When does it stop being a 'trend')
More plants – less hardscapes... FINALLY!**

**Think about everything
you can do!**



**Permeable surfacing to
capture rainwater.
Pollinator support.
Espaliered fruit trees.**



**Pot =
moveable
colour**





**Be adventurous.
Think outside the
box...or pot.**

**Try new things and
visit botanical
gardens to
broaden horizons!**

**Uses for veggies might surprise you.
That's *Allium* 'Millennium'!**



**Design:
Flowers come
and go.**

**TEXTURE will
make or break
your landscape.**





We don't use bold textures often enough.

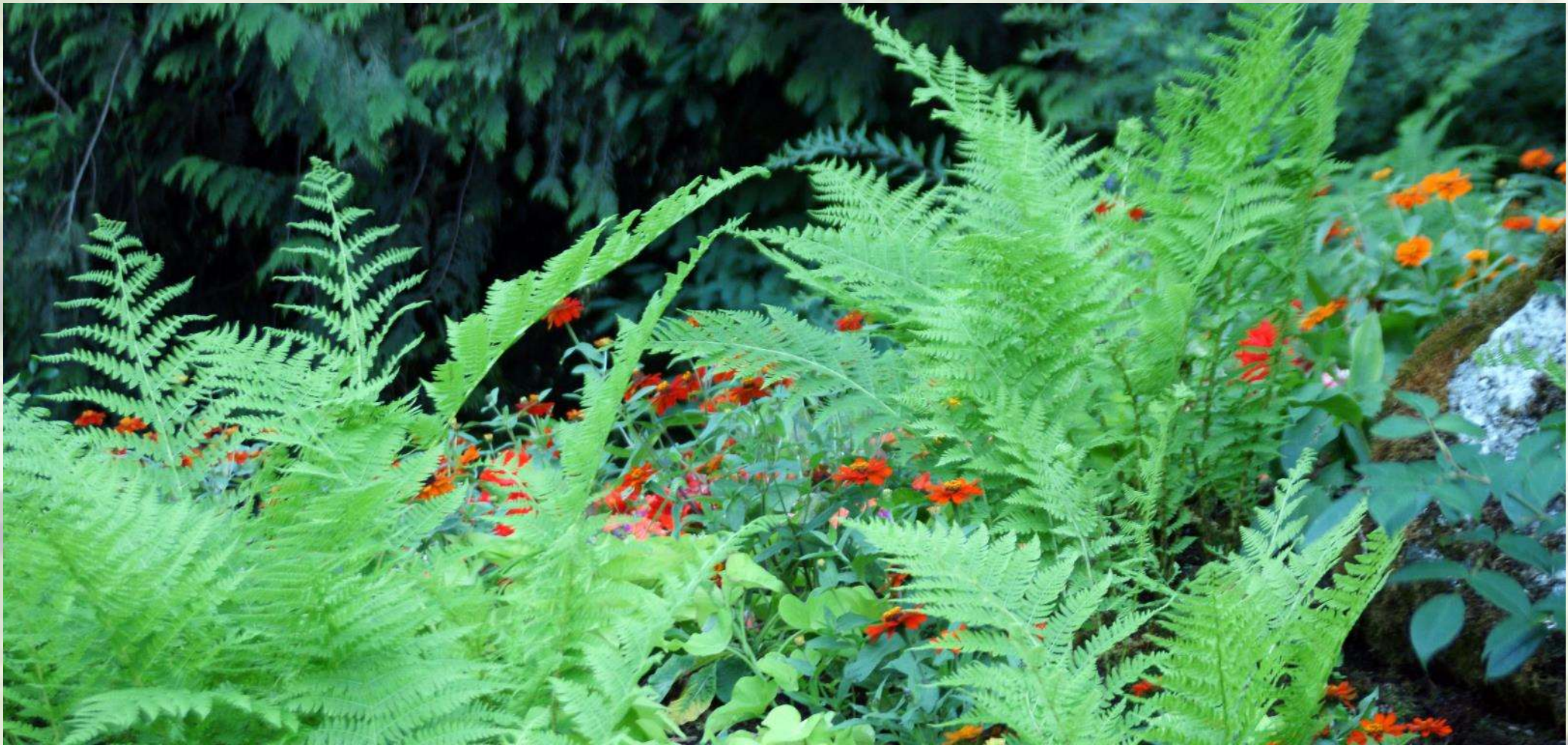




The three main textures: Bold, Sword-shaped (grassy) and feathery (which can be a relative thing).



Don't worry too much about where textbooks say plant will grow. These Zinnias (orange) are in a surprising amount of shade!





Community gardens are growing in popularity and prove that the public is still interested in gardening. My profession, generally, is simply not tapping into the market.



Downtown Vancouver! (actually squatting on an old gas station property!)

Community gardens are also a great place to inspire the young, and get generations working together, sharing wisdom!





**Not all
'pests' are
'pests'.
Leave
caterpillars
when you
can. They
bring birds!**

Composting



An old wisdom? Incorporate wood: Hügelkultur !



Pleaaase avoid use of invasives

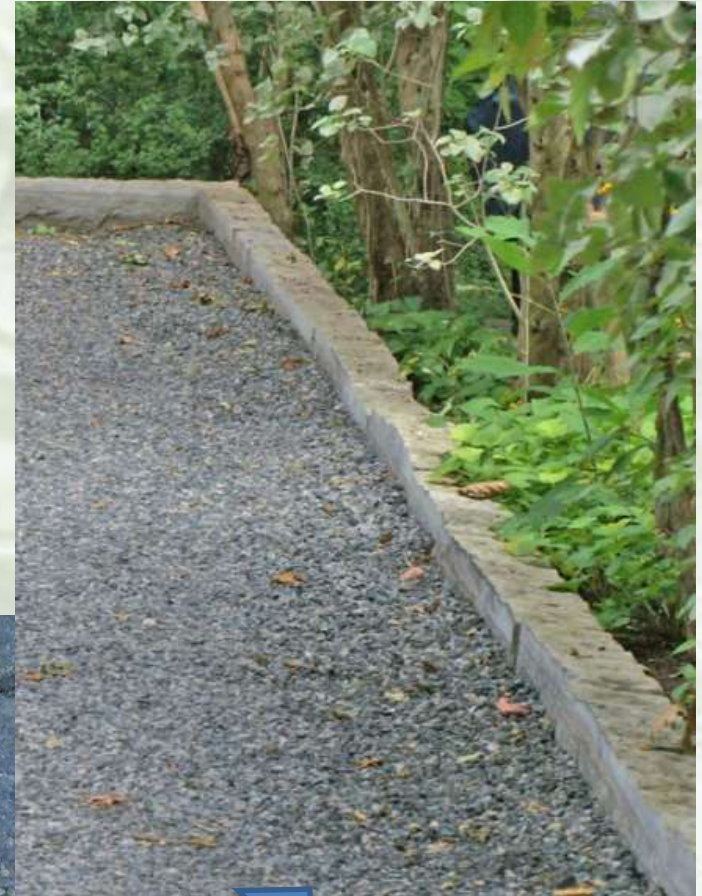
- They do terrible damage to the environment.
- There are **ALWAYS** better options! Eg: Norway Maple vs. Ruby Lace Honey Locust)



Analysis: Are you doing *everything* you can to help the ecology?



Greenroofing



Permeable Surfacing



Online Resources

- **Savvy Gardening!**
 - <https://savvygardening.com/>
- **Joe Lamp'l**
 - <https://joegardener.com/>
- **Steven Biggs**
 - <https://stevenbiggs.ca/>
- **Craig LeHoullier (recommended by Niki Jabbour!)**
 - <https://www.craiglehoullier.com/>
- **Perennia (also recommended by Niki Jabbour!)**
 - <https://www.perennia.ca/>
- **Emma Biggs**
 - <https://www.emmabiggs.ca/>
- **Linda Crago – Tree and Twig**
 - <http://treeandtwig.squarespace.com/about/>



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