History of the Helen M. Kippax Garden

Helen M. Kippax (late 1940s)

The Stedman family of Brantford, Ontario has been associated with Royal Botanical Gardens for almost 60 years. In the 1940s Mary Stedman and her late sisters, Margaret and Ruth, were introduced to Royal Botanical Gardens by their aunt, Helen Kippax. In 2005, a decision was made by the sisters to support the development of a garden to commemorate the life and legacy of Helen Kippax, one of the eight founding members of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (1934).

Bounded on three sides by the natural lands of the Grindstone Creek Valley, the 0.4 hectares (1 acre) Helen M. Kippax Garden features native plants and native plant cultivars in a design that showcases southern Ontario's native plants. The garden design is by Martin Wade Landscape Architects.

A garden for the 21st century

The Helen M. Kippax Garden features native trees, shrubs, perennials and grasses and their cultivars, and makes some use of ornamentals. In the context of this garden, Royal Botanical Gardens defines a native species as one that was present in Ontario prior to the arrival of European colonists in the 18th century. Over 135 native species are displayed in plant community zones that represent several local habitats including prairie, oak savannah, Carolinian forest and wetland pond. Turf areas feature Eco-lawn, an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional lawns. Native plant gardening expert and author, Lorraine Johnson, assisted as native plant consultant.

Sebastian Irazuzta

The garden's design and intent responds to society's increased interest in sustainable gardening, native plants and environmental stewardship. It showcases sustainable gardening practices, including xeriscaping, pesticide-free gardening, wildlife/butterfly gardening, and high diversity gardening. This design moves the concept of a botanical garden into the 21st century by designing with plant communities (plants that coexist in natural settings). We hope that the garden inspires your interest in the beauty of native plants for use in public and private gardens.

A sense of place

The physical setting of the Grindstone Creek valley and tableland is celebrated and incorporated into the layout of the garden. Framing devices and seating create a series of vistas of the forested valley slopes, creating a visual and physical dialogue between the garden and the valley. Suitable woodlot edge plants are utilized as an interface between the woodland/valley land and the garden. Rather than seeing the forested valley slopes as a backdrop, this design embraces the forest as an integral part of the garden.

Join a growing trend: be an environmental steward in your home garden

- Plan your garden by microclimate and habitat. Then choose plants that like those conditions. Planting the right plant in the right spot supports plant health and reduces maintenance.
- Ask for native plants at your garden centre, but avoid purchasing plants collected from the wild as harvesting damages habitat and can imperil rare species. Locally sourced species are best as your plants are then genetically appropriate for your area. When you "grow local," you reduce your ecological footprint.
- Ontario Society for Ecological Restoration publishes a *Native Plant Resource Guide* listing reputable sources for seeds and plants. This booklet is available at Shop @ The Gardens in RBG Centre, or at www.serontario.org.
- Learn more about our local fauna and flora by participating in Royal Botanical Gardens' extensive public program offerings.
- Get outdoors and explore the "wild side" of the Gardens. Our 2,400 acres of nature sanctuaries offer a 23-km network of trails.
- Support local, national, and international plant conservation efforts by becoming a member of Royal Botanical Gardens. Join while visiting the Gardens or visit www.rbg.ca and click on "Support the Gardens" to purchase a membership online.

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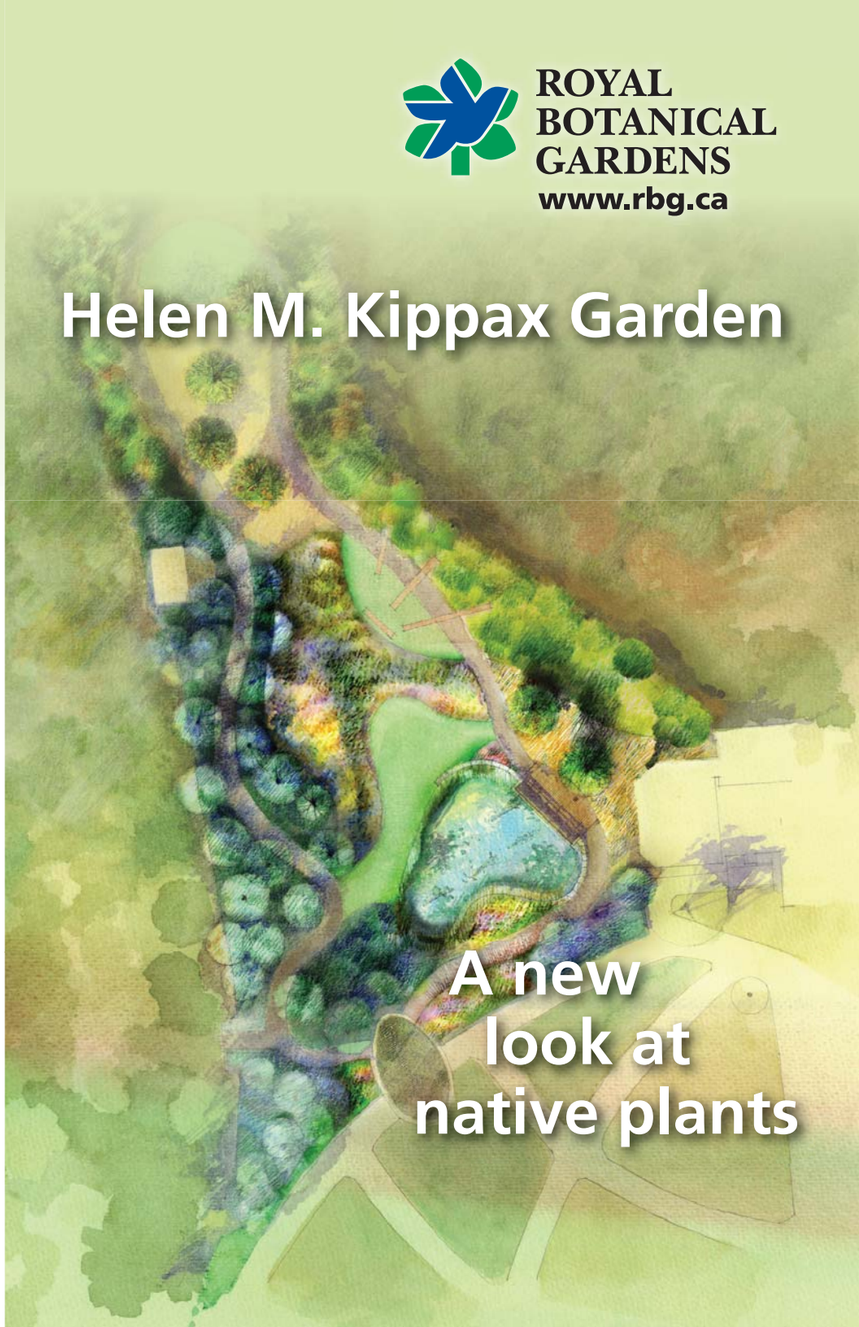
Helen M. Kippax Garden



A new look at native plants

Along with beauty, native plants bring ecological function, biodiversity and sustainability to gardens.

Native species have evolved to grow in their local conditions. Regardless of your garden's characteristics there are native plants that will thrive in your setting. The Helen M. Kippax Garden features stylized representations of several Ontario habitat types, showcased in six zones:

Ontario Prairie plants are adapted to sunny locations with moist to dry soils ranging from infertile to sandy to rich. Their deep roots and other adaptations make many of them drought tolerant. Once established, no fertilizer or supplemental water is necessary. The native grasses and wildflowers that create this community provide food, shelter and nest materials for many birds, butterflies and insects. Like oak savannah, this community depends on fire to help cycle nutrients, sprout seeds and stop invasive species from spreading.

Oak Savannahs are characterized by prairie-type herbaceous plants within widely spaced oak trees. In your garden these species can be planted in areas with dappled sun and shade, sandy soil and little irrigation. Oak savannah species support many forms of wildlife by providing food, shelter and nesting sites. Birds attracted to your yard actively look for garden pests, an added bonus of oak savannahs.

Carolinian Forest is a rich multi-layered forest with moist, well-drained mineral soil rich in organic matter. This soil develops naturally through recycling of leaf, twig, and flower materials. When creating a forest in your yard, start with lots of rich leaf mold compost. In the fall put your rake away and let the leaves stay put. This low maintenance approach will eventually create a rich soil, reducing the need to fertilize and water. The Carolinian forest is Canada's most biodiverse, providing gardeners with a wide selection of pest-resistant plants that also attract wildlife.

Woodland Edges are home to native shrubs, understorey species and groundcovers that can enhance any garden. Plants in this zone grow in rich soil from sun to shade. Adding seasonal colour, plus food and cover for wildlife, these plants are also pest and disease tolerant. As hedgerows and foundation plantings, these native plants provide secure spaces for wildlife to travel in the otherwise inhospitable urban landscape.

Pond and surrounding wetlands offer tranquility and provide an essential life requirement … water. Incorporate wetland species into your own garden pond or rain garden. They have water-cleaning abilities, add beauty, and provide food and shelter for other species.

Eco-lawn is a mix of seven species and hybrids of fescue that is drought, shade and salt tolerant. Grasses in this mix also demonstrate resistance to insect damage. This grass can be left unmown, resulting in a lawn about 23 centimeters (9 inches) bending over to 10 centimeters (4 inches). When mown monthly to a height of 8 to 10 centimeters (3 to 4 inches), it results in a more traditional lawn style. Seeding fescue grass reduces mowing, water consumption, and pesticide and fertilizer applications. Eco-lawn is suitable for use in most Ontario climatic zones.

The Helen M. Kippax Garden features over 135 native species and cultivars, covering a 0.4 hectare (1 acre) open area in the northwest corner of Hendrie Park Gardens. The site was originally covered by lawn, and was completely recontoured and new soil added in 2007/8. Our volunteers and staff planted 15,000 plants in the garden in late summer of 2008 — a complete plant list is available at www.rbg.ca.

Please note that not all plants in the Helen M. Kippax Garden are native. The garden also includes cultivated varieties of natives (on our labels, cultivar names are indicated in single quotation marks below the plant's scientific name), and some ornamental plants that are not native to Ontario (labeled with their geographical range).

Partial Plant List — see map for locations:

A Wild giant-hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), golden alexanders (*Zizia aurea*)

B Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), pin oak (*Quercus palustris*), prairie-smoke (*Geum triflorum*)

C New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*), hay-scented fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*), wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), common witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

D Bottle-brush grass (*Elymus hystrix*), bush honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*), meadowsweet (*Spiraea alba*)

E Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*), tufted hair grass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*), purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*)

F Maple-leaved viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), zig-zag goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*), Michigan lily (*Lilium michiganense*)

G Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*), nodding wild onion (*Allium cernuum*), lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*)

H Beaked hazel (*Corylus cornuta*), heart-leaved aster (*Symphyotrichum cordifolius*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), large-flowered bellwort (*Uvularia grandiflora*)

I Red oak (*Quercus rubra*), hairy beardtongue (*Penstemon hirsutus*), wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)

J Tall meadow-rue (*Thalictrum polyganum*), blue vervain *(Verbena hastata*), Allegheny serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*)

K Foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), red baneberry (*Actaea rubra*)

L Tamarack (*Larix laricina*), tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

M Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), eastern flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), small jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*)

N White snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), American bee balm (*Monarda didyma*)

O Marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*), broad-leaved arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*), fragrant water-lily (*Nymphaea odorata*)

P Wild calla (*Calla palustris*), cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

Q Rough woodland sunflower (*Helianthus divaricatus*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*)

R Pasture rose (*Rosa carolina*), smooth rose (*Rosa blanda*)