



# Shorewall Planting with Native Plants

## *Beneficial Barriers, Bees and Butterflies*

### **Beneficial Barriers – Phosphorus in the Trenches & Natural Wall around your Moat**

Plants along our shorewalls are the last line of defence before phosphorus leeches into our waterways. Their root systems absorb phosphorus making shorewall plantings a critical component in our War On Weeds (W.O.W.)

Shorewall plants are also a detractor of geese – they offer a stumbling block to get up on the lawn and, geese must always be aware of an escape route from land back into their safety zone, our lagoons. Plants along the shore wall impede this route and discourage invaders from breaching your land.

Shorewall plantings with native flora, grasses and plants can assist in saving the population of bees and butterflies. We are aware of the importance of bees on our ecosystem and environment and how they are in danger. By offering a safe haven full of nourishment for the bees and butterflies with shore wall plantings, we are doing something constructive to help in their survival.

We trust these positive reasons for having your shorewall full of native plants (phosphorus absorption, geese diversion, saving bees) have gotten you thinking and planning on what to do at your water's edge. Before we start on good choices, let me just mention something to avoid. The only bad choice would be a plant with a large root system near your shorewall. Over time, the roots can potentially push out the shorewall from the inside which would be a financial strain in repairs. Big root systems are truly the only bad choice in a sea of great choices for native planting.

### **What to Plant?**

I know that when we moved here from Toronto 10 years ago, bringing some of my most favourite bulbs with us, my favourite bulbs did not work up here. They struggled the first summer, and then failed to survive the winter. The next year, I was a native plant convert.

Native Plants have evolved here over a long period of time and, provide food and shelter for native bees and butterflies, including some that are becoming increasingly rare. They are also low maintenance eliminating the need for chemical pesticides and fertilizers that contaminate our water, and are generally more efficient at filtering storm water.

Planning your native garden can be as interesting and challenging as any other perennial garden.

In the past I have purchased plants from the local garden centres and with the approval of farmers, collected plants or seeds in the fall, from local fields and culverts. Your choices include sun plants, shade plants, ground covers, or shrubs. You can create a rain garden, or the very popular butterfly garden. The goal is to create a buffer along your shorewall to protect our lagoons and beautify our surroundings, how you do it is up to you.

Once your eyes are opened to native plants you will be amazed at the selection available. Bee Balm, Black-eyed Susan, Butterfly Milkweed, Columbine, Purple Coneflower, New England Aster and Wild Bergament, are a few of the most popular. But be sure they are native plants it took the third variety of Black-eyed Susans before I found one that would thrive at the water's edge.

Native plants planted along shorewalls reduce water use, eliminate need for pesticides and herbicides, attract bees and butterflies, discourage geese, look great, and help to reduce phosphorus flow into our lagoons. It is a win, win, win!

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