

Organic Landscaping Company Applewood Acres Gardening & Landscaping Focuses on Creating Sustainable Gardens

Richard (Rick) Brzakala, President of Applewood Acres Gardening & Landscaping Inc, describes Applewood's strategy of creating sustainable landscapes.

Where possible Applewood encourages that their clients use native plants around their homes and in gardens to create sustainable landscapes.

Most native plants are perennial and tolerate extremes in temperature and drought. As well their extensive root systems help to hold soil and slow water runoff, says Brzakala. Clients living in areas of the city that are prone to flooding and/or storm runoff should keep as much of their perennial debris in place as is possible. Persistent stems, leaves, and other flower and shrub parts which naturally should remain through the winter, all help to reduce spring runoff as snow melts and the spring weather brings with it many showers and rain storms. In almost all instances other organic matter accumulates around these native plants and the plants themselves absorb chemicals such

as nitrogen and phosphorous that would otherwise enter the runoff, says Brzakala.

Brzakala goes on to describe that many native plants have many positive characteristics in terms of their self-sustaining characteristics and that homeowners focused on implementing sustainable gardens and green spaces get the added benefit of knowing that their garden spaces offer peripheral benefits to other parts of the ecological chain such as wildlife, insects, pollinators, and native birds.

Applewood Acres Gardening & Landscaping has helped design and develop many sustainable gardens in and around Mississauga. As well we have helped educate many homeowners on the virtues of sustainable gardening., says Brzakala. Sustainable Landscapes Increase Biodiversity as increased numbers of plant and animal species help make a landscape sustainable. A variety of plant species provide food and shelter for birds and beneficial insects which reduce insect pest outbreaks.

Brzakala describes Applewood's Sustainability Strategy as starting with a honest discussion as to what the client really wants. Many times clients don't know what they want. We help them picture their landscape transformed with computer generated design pictorials, as well as show them a catalogue of our previous projects. It always involved listening to our clients and understanding clearly what their objectives are and then planning and discussing with our clients their expectations. Sometimes expectations need to be adjusted to conform

with the realities of the environment or other variables, says Brzakala. Many of our clients understand that nature cannot be rushed and that results may vary depending on growing cycles and what type of plants are used in their projects.

In addition to the esthetical and environmental benefits sustainable landscapes provide, Applewood help homeowners to increase the value of their property's. Beautiful vistas from the home and water are created by the use of native plants. The variety of colors and plant forms, the energy and activity of birds and insects, and the seasonal changes of both plants and animals provide diversity and visual enjoyment. On occasion, some of our clients have asked that we design garden spaces that result in the clients home being partly hidden by vegetation for greater privacy and a more natural look. Trees and shrubs reduce noise as well as help clean the air.

In all instances we try to balance the needs of the client with what the peripheral neighbourhood and immediate neighbourhood looks like. The last thing anyone wants, says Brzakala, is a neighbourhood squabble over what some feel is the creation of a unkempt and disorderly looking landscape

Successfully growing native plants requires an understanding of the evolutionary adaptations plants make to specific light and soil moisture conditions. Little maintenance is required on established landscape.

Initially, some weeding may be necessary. Once the plants have become established, there will be less time spent on mowing,

planting of annual bedding plants, chemical spraying, and trips to the compost site with leaves and grass clippings

The GTA planting zone offers a variety of soil conditions, depending on which part of the city our clients live in says Brzakala. We have seen areas where some plants have adapted to dry, sunny up slopes, while other areas are more woody and ravine like where we use woodland type plants that tolerate shade. There are also areas similar to wet meadow or boggy conditions where we have planted plant species tolerant of sun and wet soils.

Regardless of what soil or environmental conditions we face ,our clients know that once we have established a sustainable garden for them, they have helped contribute positively to the overall ecology and environment by eliminating the need to use harmful chemicals and pesticides, while also helping to protect and manage our city's water resources in a responsible manner.

In the end Applewood's projects are meant to be enjoyed by the community as much as the client and should add value to both, says Brzakala.

To learn more about Applewood and/or its sustainability strategy and over 75 service offerings visit www.applewoodacres.org or call Applewood Customer Service Group at (905) 281-3111 .