



Green Gardens at Shedd

Sustainability is integrated into every aspect of Shedd Aquarium's operations — animal care, guest service, business practices and building management. A conservation ethic permeates our culture, energizes our staff members and volunteers, inspires our guests and colleagues, and supports Shedd's vision for a healthy global environment. Our commitment extends beyond our doors and physical building to the land and landscapes around the aquarium, our sustainable gardening practices help reduce Great Lakes pollution, create wildlife habitat, provide horticultural interest and reduce the need for intensive maintenance.

Whether you adopt or adapt our best landscaping practices, a key ingredient to success is your commitment to routinely assess the overall impact of your decisions and make choices that support a healthy bottom line for your budget and the ecosystems around you.

PESTICIDE-FREE

Shedd's grounds feature an organic produce garden, which supplies staff members, volunteers, guests and our animals with fresh herbs and vegetables. Chemicals commonly used in gardens and lawns make their way into our watersheds and aquatic systems. At Shedd, we do not use pesticides or synthetic fertilizers. Instead we use compost to build healthy soils that help our plants grow strong roots and thrive.

PROVIDING HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE

We don't see many large mammals, amphibians, or reptiles in our gardens (inside the aquarium is a different story). Our gardens create habitat for many species of birds, pollinators such as butterflies, and other beneficial insects. One of Shedd's newest additions is a migratory bird garden, stocked with native plants that offer food and shelter to birds on their seasonal journeys.

NATIVE PLANTS

Some exotic garden plants can turn into aggressive invaders when they or their seeds spread beyond the yard and into natural areas. Native flowers and grasses are attractive, available in many garden stores and online, and are usually easy to grow. Native species are also superior to non-natives because they are adapted to our seasons, precipitation levels and pests.

RAIN GARDEN

One area on our grounds is consistently wetter than others; this is an ideal spot for a rain garden. Heavy rains can run off into our sewer system, picking up debris and pollutants as they rush over turf and cement. The plants in a rain garden have deep, water-loving roots that can help hold water during downpours, limiting local flooding and runoff. We chose to locate our rain garden next to a downspout that drains our front terrace. The water collected flows through our rain garden and is naturally filtered before returning to our watershed.





WATER CONSERVATION

In addition to capturing water in rain barrels, we carefully choose which plants to grow. Xeric plants are adapted to tolerate dry conditions, so they require less watering and care. Our sprinkler system is timed to come on early in the morning when evaporation rates are lower. We also mow early in the morning, to minimize the impact of the exhaust emissions, and mulch the grass back into the lawn.

LOCAL MULCH

Exposed soil tends to dry out quickly and erode. We prevent the loss of topsoil by covering exposed soil with mulch. Blommer's Chocolate Factory, a local company, supplies us with its waste cocoa shells, which it packages as mulch. The next time you stop and smell our flowers, you might get a fragrant whiff of cocoa, too.

NATIVE PLANTS YOU'LL FIND IN SHEDD'S GARDENS

TREES AND SHRUBS

- American beauty berry (*Callicarpa americana*)
- American cranberry viburnum (*Viburnum trilobum*)
- American filbert (*Corylus americana*)
- Apple serviceberry (*Amelanchier grandiflora*)
- Common pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)
- Deciduous holly (*Ilex decidua*)
- Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)
- Fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*)
- Nannyberry viburnum (*Viburnum lentago*)
- Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)
- Red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*)
- Shrubby St. John's wort (*Hypericum prolificum*)
- Smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*)
- Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*)
- U.S. blue spruce (*Picea pungens*)
- U.S. bottlebrush buckeye (*Aesculus parviflora*)
- U.S. bristlecone pine (*Pinus aristata*)
- U.S. cornelian cherry dogwood (*Cornus mas*)
- U.S. shadblow serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*)
- U.S. sweetbay magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)
- Wild hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*)

- Witchhazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*)
- Witherod viburnum (*Viburnum cassinoides*)

PERRENIALS

- Beardtongue (*Penstemon grandiflora*)
- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Blue wild indigo (*Baptisia australis*)
- Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)
- Butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- Celadine poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*)
- Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
- Crested iris (*Iris cristata*)
- Eastern blazing star (*Liatris scariosa*)
- Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*)
- Joe-Pye weed (*Eupatorium purpureum*)
- New England aster (*Aster novae-angliae*)
- Ohio spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*)
- Prairie trillium (*Trillium recurvatum*)
- Wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
- Wild geranium (*Geranium maculatum*)
- Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)

