



Grand Gardens – Get your nominations in!

Members have been sending in their nominations!

The Grand Gardens program is in full swing now.

If you see a great looking garden you feel should be part of the Fergus Grand Garden selection, please send it in. All we need is the address.

This is a great way to recognize people that do a fantastic job in designing and maintaining their gardens. It also congratulates them and leaves them with a feeling their efforts are being recognized. It's good all around for them, for us, for the town and visitors to our area.

Please send your nominations back through this email address (FergusHorticulture@gmail.com).

Here are the criteria we use in assessing gardens

1. Curb Appeal

Curb appeal; the attractiveness of the property from the street. There is a good first impression that catches your attention. The exterior looks inviting and welcoming.

2. Visual Appeal and Impact

Visual appeal and impact are usually your initial reaction to the overall garden and/or yard. A good example is if you are driving by a house and see a garden that leaves an impression on you before you have noted the different aspects of the garden. These different aspects might include:

- Colour interest – Garden has complementary colours, including those of rocks, mulch and other non-plant materials. These colours work together.
- Interest in texture – This includes texture of plants (hairy, waxy, feathery, spikes, etc.) and landscape materials. Lighting and presence of shade also bring out the interesting textures in the garden.
- Unique features – Decorative materials that can capture the eye such as pieces of art, water fountains, architectural features and hanging baskets are part of the overall effect a garden has.

3. Design

Design considers the different aspects of the garden that contribute to its whole. It's a longer observation. Choice and placement of plants and other materials are two important factors.

Multifunctional gardens also represent good design. They integrate balance, composition and creativity with ecological function.

- A downspout directed to a dry creek bed leading to a raingarden can be aesthetically pleasing and is multifunctional.
- Balance – There is fluidity and symmetry in the design. There is also a variety of height and shape among the plants.
- Composition – The layout complements the surroundings including the house and neighbourhood. For example the colours of the plants blend with or accentuate the colour of the house. This also includes placement of plants and objects in relation to each other.
- Creativity – Some of the features have never been tried or seen before or are used in new ways. They cause some element of awe in the observer. This could be a unique choice of plants or decorative materials.
- Seasonal interest – This can be described as interest throughout the growing season. We can only view the current stage of the growing season but there may be indication of a succession of blooms and other elements that keep the garden interesting and beautiful at all times.

4. Maintenance

Dedicated maintenance is the key to a beautiful and healthy garden.

- Appropriately deadheaded – We prefer deadheads are left alone if they provide food and habitat for wildlife. Some dried plants provide seasonal interest throughout the winter. Other plants such as hostas don't provide forage and are just unattractive unless the dead material is removed.
- Appropriately mulched – freshly mulched in bare areas; mulch may not be necessary if the garden is thickly covered with plants. Mulch coverage should not be too thin or thick.
- No standing water (unless rain in the last 48 hours). If there is standing water the raingarden is not functioning properly.

5. Environmental Stewardship

Environmental stewardship takes responsibility over the care of our natural resources to ensure they are sustainably managed. It includes conservation of biological diversity, forest ecosystem health and vitality plus sustainable maintenance of soil and water.

- Conserve inputs – The garden minimizes the need for water, fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide. For water use some ways to tell the homeowner is minimizing inputs includes the appropriate placement of native perennials, the presence of rain barrels, redirected downspouts and soaker hoses. Trees provide canopy in a yard. They conserve inputs and are an excellent stormwater feature.
- Concave Boulevard – Garden is shaped to allow water to flow into the boulevard and to infiltrate the ground. There is no sign of erosion from the boulevard.