



LOWER TRENT CONSERVATION

The Simple Guide to...

DIY Shoreline Gardening

2014

Shorelines – the vibrant boundaries where lakes, rivers and streams meet land – are ribbons of life. The vegetation along a shoreline helps absorb runoff, protects against erosion and improves wildlife habitat. Deep rooted native plants such as tall grasses, shrubs, and trees, aquatic vegetation such as reeds or cattails help “bugger” the shoreline and protect our waterways. If you want to plant native flowers, trees and shrubs along your waterfront here’s how to get started.

Step 1: What’s your shoreline vision?

Decide how you want to use your shoreline. Do you want to: access water to swim; have a view of the water; attract wildlife? It is possible to create a multi-purpose natural shoreline irresistible to both people and critters.

Step 2: Pick your project site

Measure the area to know how much room you have to work with. You may decide to tackle just a portion of your shoreline to start and then expand if you like the results.

Step 3: Choosing plants

To pick the right native plant species, consider the site’s light and moisture conditions. Think about the height your plants will be at maturity, placing trees and shrubs at the edges of your field of view to maintain sightlines of the water. Try to serve up a buffet of native plant species for wildlife and pollinators.

Step 4: Sketch it

Make a sketch of your shoreline and where you want to plant. Mark existing vegetation and structures and then draw in the new planting beds. Knowing how much space you have will help determine the number of plants to buy. Plan to fit about 3-5 wildflowers, or a single shrub per square metre of shoreline.

Step 5: Prepare the site - options

Removing weed competition before planting is critical. You may wish to do the following: stop mowing the lawn right to the water’s edge and see what comes up; solarize the planting area by covering it with black or clear plastic during the summer to heat and kill any weed seeds in the soil; make a Lasagna Garden by covering the area with cardboard or 10 sheets of newsprint, adding a foot of soil or compost, and toping it off with a few inches of wood chips; remove sod; or till.

Step 6: Planting time!

Spring and fall are the best times to plant your shoreline oasis. Plant wildflowers in groupings of 3, 5, 7 or 9 plants to create a fuller look. Water well.

Step 7: After care

Some maintenance of your shoreline garden is required during the first year. Water your plants deeply once a week throughout the summer. Pull weeds to give your plants a head start. You won’t need to add any fertilizer since native plants are well adapted to the local environment.



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Planning Your Shoreline

Lower Trent Conservation offers grants to help offset the cost of native plants for approved shoreline naturalization projects through our **Healthy Lands - Clean Water Program**.

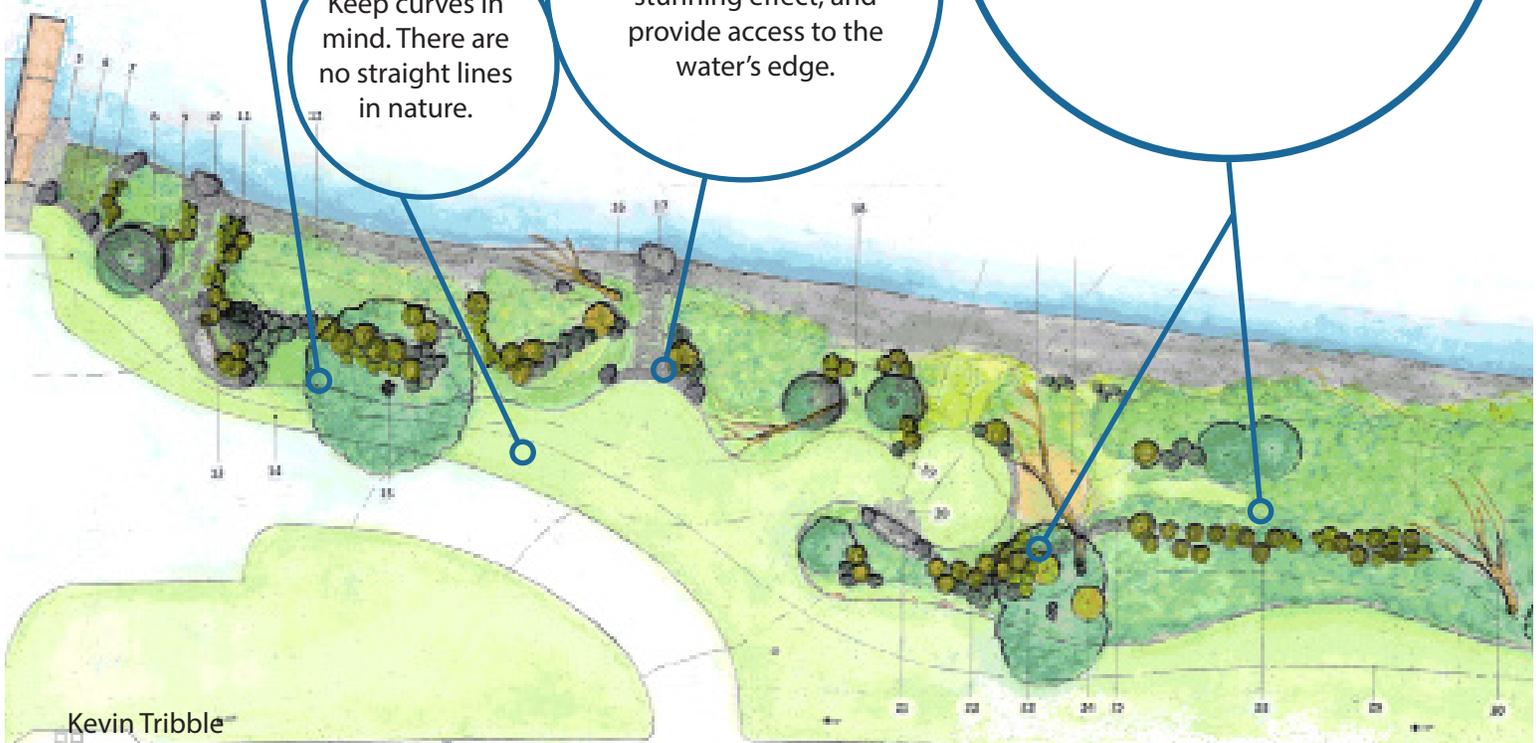
You may also require a permit to complete any shoreline work.
Contact us for more details.

Plan & plant a variety of native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers

Keep curves in mind. There are no straight lines in nature.

Simple paths made from stone and other material can create a stunning effect, and provide access to the water's edge.

Keep it wild! Areas that are not influenced by humans act as habitat and a food source for a wide range of wildlife. Fallen trees and brush also act as habitat. And fallen trees near the water act as habitat for fish!



Kevin Tribble