



Natural Gardens vs. Grass and Weeds - Comments needed by Mar 31

You may already be aware that the City is looking for feedback on a proposed change to the "**Grass and Weeds**" bylaw. This issue has a long unhappy history and it's time to find a fix that really works. **The deadline for comments is 11.59 pm on March 31. Send comments to MLSFeedback@toronto.ca.**

If you would like more background information please read this [letter](#) from Project Swallowtail to its Block Ambassadors.

The City has invited public input regarding revisions to the Grass and Weeds bylaw, specifically a proposal to remove the Natural Garden Exemption.

Removing the Natural Garden Exemption without making other significant changes to the bylaw achieves little and could in fact be a step backwards, as it does not resolve the vagueness and arbitrariness of the bylaw.



The City currently requires anyone with a naturalised garden (i.e. a native plant garden as opposed to lawns and non-native plants) to obtain an exemption for this type of garden from Municipal Licensing Standards.

This is in conflict with Toronto's sustainability initiatives, including its Ravine, Biodiversity and Pollinator Strategies, conflict with the City's Grass and Weeds Bylaw.

***Lorraine Johnson** and others have prepared some talking points for comments on this issue. Please feel free to copy and paste or create your own.*

The bylaw regulates "grass and weeds" and requires them to be cut to 20cm. **The term "grass" is undefined**, and so the more than 12,000 grass species (for example, sweetgrass, corn, native tallgrass prairie grasses, and non-native horticultural grasses such as feather reed grass) are subject to the bylaw's restrictions. We urge you to remove this requirement or to define the grasses that are covered under this requirement in a clear and meaningful way.

While the bylaw defines “weeds” as those listed in the provincial Weed Control Act’s Noxious Weeds List and other “local weeds” designated by the City, there is much room for confusion because the Weed Control Act specifically exempts urban areas. As well, no “local weeds” have been designated. **We urge you to identify, in the bylaw, the specific “weeds”** that are prohibited, so that residents have clarity.

We urge you to place a minimum onus on complainants to identify what prohibited species and/or health or safety threat(s) exist in the garden before any enforcement action is undertaken.

Thank you!

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We are happy to have people on our list who just want to keep up with what we are doing but if you do not want to receive our messages please ***Unsubscribe*** using the option at the bottom of this message. Please send any questions to stewards@highparknature.org

