

NEW BRUNSWICK LANDSCAPING

Garden Design & Planting

Garden planning, native plant selection, perennial borders, and planting for NB's Zone 4-5 climate

20 Expert Answers from Landscape IQ

newbrunswicklandscaping.com/construction-brain

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Best low-maintenance foundation bed for a ranch?

A foundation bed with evergreen shrubs, ornamental grasses, and hardy perennials offers the perfect low-maintenance solution for New Brunswick ranch homes. This combination provides year-round structure, requires minimal pruning, and thrives in our Zone 4-5 climate with minimal intervention once established.

For the **backbone of your foundation planting**, choose compact evergreen shrubs that won't outgrow their space. Dwarf Alberta spruce, compact yews like 'Densiformis', and dwarf mugo pines work beautifully in NB's climate. These provide winter interest when everything else is dormant and require virtually no maintenance beyond occasional light shaping. Plant them 4-6 feet apart and 3-4 feet from your foundation to allow for mature size.

Fill in with ornamental grasses like Karl Foerster feather reed grass or little bluestem, which add movement and texture while being incredibly drought-tolerant once established. These grasses look stunning through fall and winter, then simply get cut back once in early spring. Between the evergreens and grasses, add **hardy perennials** like purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, and daylilies that bloom reliably with minimal care.

For New Brunswick specifically, this combination handles our clay soils well, survives our harsh winters without protection, and tolerates both the wet springs and occasional summer dry spells. The key is improving your soil once with compost when planting, then applying a 3-inch layer of mulch to suppress weeds and retain moisture.

Practical maintenance involves just three tasks annually: cutting back grasses and perennials in early May, refreshing mulch every other year, and dividing perennials every 4-5 years when they get crowded. No regular watering needed after the first year, no fertilizing required in most NB soils, and no pest or disease issues with these tough plants.

Avoid high-maintenance choices like roses (need regular pruning and disease management), annual flowers (replanting every year), or fast-growing shrubs like forsythia that require frequent pruning to stay in bounds. Also skip boxwood, which struggles in our Zone 4 winters despite being popular elsewhere.

This foundation design works particularly well for ranch homes because the horizontal lines of grasses and low shrubs complement the home's profile, while the evergreens provide vertical anchors at corners or entries. The mature height stays between 2-4 feet, perfect scale for a single-story home.

Plant in June for best establishment before winter, water regularly the first season, then enjoy years of beautiful, virtually maintenance-free landscaping that enhances your home's curb appeal through all four seasons.

Need help finding a landscaper to install your low-maintenance foundation bed? New Brunswick Landscaping can match you with local professionals who understand our climate and soil conditions.

Best foundation bed designs for a split-level?

Split-level homes benefit from foundation plantings that create visual balance and soften the angular architecture, with layered designs that complement the home's multi-level structure.

The key to successful foundation planting around a split-level is addressing the unique challenges these homes present. Unlike ranch or two-story homes, split-levels have varying foundation heights, multiple entry points, and often prominent front-facing garage doors that need visual softening. Your planting design should create flow between the different levels while establishing clear entry hierarchy.

Start with your upper level foundation where the main living areas are located. This typically needs the most substantial plantings since it's the visual anchor of your home. Use a classic three-layer approach: a backdrop of evergreen shrubs (4-6 feet at maturity), mid-level flowering shrubs (2-4 feet), and low perennials or groundcover in front. For New Brunswick's Zone 4-5 conditions, excellent backbone evergreens include compact yews like 'Densiformis', dwarf spruces such as 'Nest Spruce', or PJM rhododendrons that handle our winters beautifully.

The lower level and garage area requires different treatment. Since this section often feels heavy or imposing, use lighter plantings that don't add visual weight. Ornamental grasses like Karl Foerster feather reed grass work wonderfully here, along with lower shrubs like spirea or potentilla that provide seasonal color without overwhelming the space. Avoid planting large shrubs directly in front of garage doors – instead, flank them with matching plantings and use colorful annuals in containers for seasonal interest.

Creating visual connection between levels is crucial for split-level success. Repeat key plants at both levels to create unity – perhaps the same evergreen shrub species in different sizes, or echoing your color palette with similar flowering plants. Consider how the plantings look from your main entry point and from the street. The goal is making the two levels feel like one cohesive design rather than separate, disconnected areas.

For New Brunswick specifically, plan your foundation beds for year-round interest since we're looking at them through snow for five months. Include at least 60% evergreen structure, and choose deciduous shrubs with interesting bark or persistent berries. Plant in late May through August for best establishment before winter, and ensure good drainage since our clay soils and freeze-thaw cycles can cause issues with poorly draining foundation beds.

Practical sizing guidelines: Plan beds that are 6-8 feet deep along your main foundation wall, tapering to 4-5 feet along lower sections. This provides enough space for proper plant layering while keeping mature plants from touching your siding. Budget \$15-25 per square foot for professional installation including plants, soil amendment, and mulch.

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Q3

Best plants for a cottage-style garden in NB?

Cottage gardens thrive in New Brunswick's climate with the right plant selection. Focus on hardy perennials, self-seeding annuals, and old-fashioned favorites that can handle our Zone 4-5 winters and Maritime humidity.

The key to a successful cottage garden in NB is choosing plants that naturalize well and don't require fussy maintenance. Many traditional cottage plants actually prefer our cooler summers and adapt well to our acidic soils. The informal, slightly wild look of cottage gardens also works beautifully with our shorter growing season since you're not aiming for perfect uniformity.

Perennial Backbone Plants form the foundation of your cottage garden. Delphiniums are spectacular in NB's cool climate but need staking and rich soil. Hollyhocks self-seed readily and create that classic cottage look, though they may need rust treatment in humid years. Peonies are perfect for our climate - plant them in fall and they'll bloom reliably for decades. Lupines naturalize beautifully in NB and actually prefer our acidic soil. Bee balm spreads readily and attracts pollinators, while catmint provides long-season color and deer resistance.

Self-Seeding Annuals give that casual, overflowing cottage look. Sweet alyssum, calendula, and bachelor buttons will reseed themselves year after year once established. Cosmos handle our variable weather beautifully and bloom until frost. Cleome (spider flower) creates dramatic height and self-seeds reliably. Start these from seed in late May when soil temperatures reach 10°C consistently.

Climbing Elements add vertical interest essential to cottage style. Clematis varieties like 'Jackmanii' are perfectly hardy here and bloom on new wood, making them foolproof. Sweet peas can be direct-seeded in early May and provide fragrance and cut flowers. Morning glories handle our short season well if started indoors in April.

Fragrant Herbs and Flowers are cottage garden essentials that thrive in NB. Lavender needs excellent drainage but 'Munstead' variety survives our winters in protected spots. Rosemary won't overwinter but makes a beautiful annual. Plant mint in containers to prevent spreading. Sweet woodruff makes excellent groundcover in shaded areas.

Timing for New Brunswick is crucial for cottage garden success. Plant perennials in June for best establishment before winter. Start annual seeds indoors in April or direct seed after May 20th in most areas. Many cottage plants actually prefer our cool spring weather for germination.

Soil Preparation matters more than plant selection. Most cottage plants prefer neutral to slightly alkaline soil, but our NB soils are typically acidic. Add lime in early spring to raise pH to 6.5-7.0. Work in plenty of compost since cottage gardens are traditionally grown in rich, well-amended soil.

Consider your specific location within NB - coastal gardens can include more tender plants like roses, while inland areas should stick to Zone 4 hardy selections. The informal nature of cottage gardens actually works in your favor here, as you can easily replace any plants that don't survive with new varieties.

Professional help makes sense for initial garden design and soil preparation, especially if you're creating new beds or dealing with drainage issues. However, most cottage garden maintenance and planting is perfect for DIY once the framework is established.

Need help finding a landscaper to create your cottage garden beds? New Brunswick Landscaping can match you with local professionals who understand our growing conditions.

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What trees and shrubs look good in winter in NB?

New Brunswick winters are long, so choosing plants with winter interest is crucial for maintaining an attractive landscape from November through April. The key is selecting species that offer structure, colorful bark, persistent berries, or evergreen foliage that can handle our Zone 4-5 conditions and heavy snow loads.

Evergreen trees form the backbone of winter landscapes in New Brunswick. **White spruce** and **balsam fir** are native choices that handle our climate perfectly, providing deep green color and classic Maritime character.

Eastern white pine offers softer texture with its long needles and becomes more picturesque with age. For smaller properties, **dwarf Alberta spruce** maintains perfect pyramidal form under snow. These evergreens also provide crucial wildlife shelter during harsh NB winters.

Deciduous trees with interesting bark add warmth to winter scenes. **Paper birch** is spectacular with its white bark peeling in papery strips, especially striking against snow. **Red maple** and **sugar maple** develop attractive gray bark patterns as they mature. **American beech** holds its bronze leaves through winter, creating movement and sound in winter winds. **Mountain ash** (rowan) not only has smooth gray bark but often retains bright orange berries that feed winter birds.

Evergreen shrubs provide essential winter structure at eye level. **Common juniper** and **creeping juniper** offer blue-green foliage and low, spreading forms that look beautiful draped with snow. **Mugo pine** creates rounded, architectural shapes that define garden spaces in winter. **Yew** (where protected from harsh winds) provides deep green color and can be pruned into formal shapes. **Rhododendrons** like PJM varieties survive NB winters and offer large evergreen leaves, though they need wind protection.

Deciduous shrubs with winter berries or interesting stems extend the season significantly. **Winterberry holly** (female plants) produces brilliant red berries that persist through winter - just ensure you plant both male and female plants for berry production. **Red-osier dogwood** offers bright red stems that become more vivid in winter, especially when planted in groups. **Serviceberry** has smooth gray bark and sometimes retains dried berries. **Rose hips** from rugosa roses or other hardy varieties provide orange to red color through early winter.

Ornamental grasses might seem surprising for winter interest, but several varieties thrive in New Brunswick and look stunning with snow and frost. **Little bluestem** turns bronze-orange and holds its form well. **Switch grass** provides tall, airy plumes that catch snow beautifully. Cut these back in late winter rather than fall to maintain their winter structure.

Placement considerations are crucial in our Maritime climate. Position evergreens to block harsh northwest winds while framing views of deciduous trees with interesting bark. Plant berry-producing shrubs where you can see them

from windows during long winter months. Group plants with similar winter features together for maximum impact - a grove of paper birch or a mass planting of red-stemmed dogwood creates more drama than single specimens.

Maintenance for winter interest involves strategic pruning timing. Prune red-osier dogwood in late winter to encourage new red growth. Don't deadhead ornamental grasses until spring. Avoid heavy pruning of evergreens, which can create entry points for ice damage.

The key to successful winter landscapes in New Brunswick is choosing plants rated for at least Zone 4, providing wind protection where needed, and thinking about how your landscape will look for five months of winter. A well-planned winter garden makes the long wait for spring much more enjoyable and adds significant value to your property year-round.

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Q5

What are the best perennials for full sun gardens in zone 5a New Brunswick?

The best full-sun perennials for zone 5a New Brunswick include black-eyed Susan, purple coneflower, daylilies, bee balm, and New England aster — all of which thrive in Maritime conditions and deliver reliable colour from June through October. These plants tolerate NB's acidic soils (pH 4.5–6.0), handle the humidity that promotes fungal issues, and return year after year without fuss.

Black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia) is practically bulletproof in zone 5a areas like Moncton and Saint John. It blooms from July through September, self-seeds gently, and tolerates the sandy coastal soils found along the Fundy coast. Pair it with **purple coneflower (Echinacea purpurea)**, which blooms at the same time and attracts pollinators while standing up to NB's occasional summer dry spells. Both grow 2–3 feet tall and work beautifully in mid-border positions.

Daylilies (Hemerocallis) are the workhorses of New Brunswick perennial gardens. Choose early, mid, and late-season varieties to get blooms from late June through August. The naturalized orange daylily grows wild along NB roadsides, but named cultivars like 'Stella de Oro' (reblooming yellow) and 'Happy Returns' offer more refined garden performance. They handle full sun, part shade, clay soil, sandy soil — essentially anything NB throws at them.

For late-season interest, **New England aster** is a native Maritime powerhouse that explodes with purple-blue flowers in September and October, right when most gardens are fading. **Bee balm (Monarda)** fills the July gap with red, pink, or purple blooms that hummingbirds love, though you should choose mildew-resistant varieties like 'Jacob Cline' given NB's high humidity.

Other strong performers for zone 5a include **catmint (Nepeta)** for its long bloom season and deer resistance, **Russian sage (Perovskia)** for a silvery-blue haze from August onward, and **Sedum 'Autumn Joy'** for fall colour and winter structure. Wild bergamot and wild columbine are excellent native options that support local pollinators while requiring minimal care.

A well-planned full-sun perennial garden in New Brunswick runs **\$500 to \$2,000 for a 100-square-foot bed**, depending on plant sizes and soil amendments. Start planting in early June after the last frost (around May 15 in Saint John, May 20 in Fredericton), or plant in early September to let roots establish before freeze-up. Adding 2–3 inches of mulch helps retain moisture through NB's warmest months and insulates roots heading into winter.

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Q6

How do I plan a four-season garden for New Brunswick's Maritime climate?

Planning a four-season garden in New Brunswick means selecting plants that provide visual interest in every season — spring bulbs and early bloomers, summer perennials and annuals, fall foliage and late flowers, and winter structure from evergreens, bark, and seedheads. The Maritime climate with its 120–150 day growing season, heavy snowfall of 250–300cm, and periodic ice storms demands tough, adaptable plants.

Spring (April–May) begins with snowdrops, crocuses, and early daffodils pushing through melting snow. Follow those with tulips, bleeding heart, and Virginia bluebells for colour before perennials emerge. Flowering shrubs like **serviceberry (Amelanchier)** — a New Brunswick native — produce white blossoms in early May and are among the first woody plants to bloom. Forsythia also performs well in zone 5a coastal areas around Moncton and Saint John.

Summer (June–September) is your showtime. Layer daylilies, black-eyed Susans, bee balm, and purple coneflower for continuous bloom. Add native wild bergamot and New England aster for pollinator value. Ornamental grasses like Karl Foerster feather reed grass provide vertical interest and movement. Hydrangeas — particularly the paniculata types like 'Limelight' — are reliable bloomers in NB's acidic soil and deliver colour from July through frost.

Fall (September–November) is where many NB gardens shine naturally. New England aster and Sedum 'Autumn Joy' carry flowers into October. Choose shrubs with fall foliage colour: **red osier dogwood** turns deep red, **highbush blueberry** goes scarlet, and **serviceberry** offers brilliant orange. Ornamental grasses hit their peak with golden plumes that persist well into winter. Plant fall-blooming anemones for a late surprise before freeze-up.

Winter (December–March) depends on structure and evergreens. Plant **white spruce, eastern white cedar, and mugo pine** as anchors. Deciduous shrubs with interesting bark — red osier dogwood's crimson stems and yellow-twig dogwood's golden branches — become focal points against snow. Leave ornamental grass plumes and coneflower seedheads standing through winter for texture and bird habitat.

Tie the design together with **hardscape elements** that look good year-round: a stone path, a well-placed boulder, or a wooden arbour. Professional four-season garden design in New Brunswick typically costs **\$300 to \$1,500 for the plan**, with installation running \$1,500 to \$5,000 or more depending on the garden's size and plant selections. Start with a rough sketch mapping sun exposure through the seasons — NB's low winter sun angle means areas sunny in July may be shaded by December.

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What native plants work best in a New Brunswick cottage garden?

New Brunswick native plants are ideal for cottage gardens because they're already adapted to Maritime soil, humidity, and harsh winters — giving you that lush, informal look without constant coddling. The best NB natives for cottage-style planting include wild columbine, bee balm, black-eyed Susan, New England aster, wild bergamot, and Canada anemone, all of which self-seed and naturalize beautifully.

Wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) is the perfect cottage garden starter. Its red and yellow nodding flowers appear in May and June, it thrives in part shade to full sun, and it self-seeds without becoming invasive. Plant it along pathways or at the front of borders where its delicate form can be appreciated. It's hardy to zone 3, so it performs everywhere in New Brunswick from Campbellton to Saint John.

Bee balm (*Monarda didyma*) and **wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)** deliver the bold, billowy colour that defines cottage gardens. Bee balm offers scarlet red flowers in July while wild bergamot produces lavender blooms — both attract hummingbirds and butterflies in droves. They spread by runners, which is actually desirable in a cottage garden where plants should mingle and weave together. In NB's humid climate, give them good air circulation to minimize powdery mildew.

Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) and **New England aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*)** form the backbone of a late-season cottage display. Black-eyed Susans bloom from July through September with golden flowers that practically glow, while New England asters take over in September with masses of purple-blue daisies. Both self-seed generously — perfect for filling gaps and creating that effortless abundance.

For structure and height, add **Joe-Pye weed (*Eutrochium*)** at the back of the border. It reaches 4–6 feet with mauve flower heads that attract monarchs in late summer. **Canada anemone** makes an excellent mid-height filler, though it spreads aggressively — give it room or pair it with equally vigorous neighbours. Tuck in **wild strawberry** as a groundcover along edges.

Native shrubs complete the cottage picture. **Serviceberry** offers spring blossoms and fall colour, **winterberry holly** produces brilliant red berries for winter interest, and **native dogwoods** provide year-round structure. A cottage garden using NB natives typically costs **\$500 to \$2,000 for a 100-square-foot bed**, and because these plants are adapted to local conditions, they require far less watering, fertilizing, and pest control than exotic alternatives. Plant in early June after the last frost or in early September for fall establishment.

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Q8

How do I design a low-maintenance front yard garden in Moncton NB?

A low-maintenance front yard garden in Moncton starts with choosing zone 5a–5b hardy plants that thrive in the city's sandy-to-loamy soil and Maritime humidity without constant attention. The key is designing in layers — evergreen structure first, then tough flowering shrubs, then groundcovers that suppress weeds — so the garden looks good year-round with minimal intervention.

Begin with **foundation shrubs** along the house. Dwarf mugo pine, boxwood (choose winter-hardy varieties like 'Green Velvet'), and compact rhododendrons give year-round structure. Moncton's slightly milder coastal temperatures compared to inland Fredericton mean you can get away with broadleaf evergreens that might struggle further north. Space them properly — overcrowding is the number one cause of future maintenance headaches as shrubs outgrow their space and need constant pruning.

In front of the evergreen layer, plant **low-maintenance flowering shrubs** like 'Limelight' hydrangea, potentilla, and spirea. These bloom reliably in Moncton's climate, tolerate the acidic soil (pH 4.5–6.0), and need only one annual pruning in early spring. Ninebark ('Diablo' or 'Tiny Wine') is another excellent choice — it offers burgundy foliage, white flower clusters, and virtually zero pest problems in New Brunswick.

For the front edge, **groundcovers eliminate weeding and mowing.** Creeping thyme between stepping stones, creeping phlox cascading over a low wall, or sweet woodruff in shadier spots all form dense mats that choke out weeds. In full sun areas, sedum 'Dragon's Blood' spreads quickly and adds fall colour. These groundcovers are far better than bare mulch, which needs refreshing every year and still allows weed seeds to germinate.

Mulch the entire bed with 3 inches of cedar or hemlock bark mulch after planting. This suppresses weeds, retains moisture through Moncton's warm summers, and insulates roots against the winter freeze-thaw cycles. Avoid dyed mulches — they break down poorly and look artificial. Top up mulch annually rather than replacing it entirely.

Keep the design simple with **odd-numbered groupings** (3s and 5s) and no more than 5–7 different plant species. Repetition creates a cohesive, professional look. A curved bed edge is easier to maintain than intricate shapes. Professional front yard garden design and installation in Moncton runs **\$1,500 to \$5,000** for a typical foundation planting. For a truly low-maintenance result, invest in landscape fabric beneath mulch in shrub beds — but never use it under groundcovers, which need soil contact to spread.

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Q9

What flowers bloom all summer long in New Brunswick zone 4?

The longest-blooming flowers for New Brunswick zone 4 include daylilies, catmint, blanket flower, coreopsis, and reblooming varieties of echinacea — all capable of delivering colour from late June through September in inland areas like Fredericton, Woodstock, and the upper Saint John River valley. Zone 4 (4a–4b) means winter lows of -30 to -34C, so every plant must be genuinely cold-hardy, not just marginally rated.

Catmint (Nepeta 'Walker's Low') is arguably the longest-blooming perennial for zone 4 NB. It produces lavender-blue flower spikes from mid-June through September with one simple shearing after the first flush fades in July. It's drought-tolerant once established, deer-resistant, and thrives in NB's acidic soil without amendment. Plant it in masses along walkways or at border edges for maximum impact.

Blanket flower (Gaillardia) blooms non-stop from late June until hard frost, producing red and yellow daisy-like flowers that thrive in full sun and poor soil. It actually performs better in NB's thinner, sandier soils than in rich garden soil, making it ideal for northern and coastal areas. Deadheading encourages continuous bloom, but even without it, blanket flower keeps producing new flowers.

Daylilies offer the best continuous-bloom strategy when you plant early, mid, and late-season varieties together. 'Stella de Oro' and 'Happy Returns' are reblooming types that flower from late June through September. Standard varieties bloom for 3–4 weeks each, so by planting 3–4 varieties with staggered bloom times, you achieve months of coverage. Daylilies are zone 3 hardy, so they handle the coldest NB winters without issue.

Coreopsis 'Zagreb' is a compact, thread-leaf variety that blooms bright yellow from July through September and tolerates zone 4 winters reliably. Pair it with **purple coneflower (Echinacea)** — particularly reblooming varieties like 'PowWow Wild Berry' — for a colour combination that carries from July into October. Both attract butterflies and beneficial pollinators throughout NB's growing season.

For additional summer-long colour, consider **black-eyed Susan** (July–September), **bee balm** (July–August, choose mildew-resistant varieties for NB's humidity), and **hardy geranium 'Rozanne'** (June–frost, a remarkable continuous bloomer). Annual additions like calendula and nasturtium can fill early-season gaps while perennials establish.

Budget **\$500 to \$1,500** for enough perennials to fill a 100-square-foot zone 4 bed, and plant after the last frost — around May 20 in Fredericton and as late as June 1 near Bathurst.

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What are the best shade-tolerant ground covers for under trees in NB?

The best shade-tolerant groundcovers for under trees in New Brunswick include **sweet woodruff, wild ginger, bunchberry, hostas, and barren strawberry** — all of which handle the dry shade, root competition, and acidic soil (pH 4.5–6.0) found beneath mature Maritime forest trees. Grass rarely survives under dense tree canopy in NB, so groundcovers are the practical and attractive solution.

Sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) is one of the most reliable shade groundcovers for New Brunswick. It forms a dense 6–8 inch mat of whorled leaves with tiny white flowers in May, spreads steadily but not aggressively, and tolerates the dry shade under maples and birches. It's hardy to zone 3, handles NB's heavy snowfall without issue, and actually benefits from the acidic soil that most trees create. Plant 12 inches apart and expect full coverage within 2–3 seasons.

Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) is a New Brunswick native that thrives in the exact conditions found under forest trees — acidic soil, dappled shade, and cool temperatures. It produces miniature dogwood-like white flowers in spring followed by red berries in fall. At only 4–6 inches tall, it creates a beautiful woodland carpet. It requires consistently moist, acidic soil, so it works best under spruce and fir where needle mulch maintains acidity.

Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) is another NB native groundcover that forms lush colonies of heart-shaped leaves in deep shade. It spreads by rhizomes to create a dense 6-inch-tall carpet that suppresses weeds completely. The hidden brownish flowers at ground level in spring are pollinated by ground-crawling beetles — a fascinating conversation piece. Wild ginger prefers the rich, humus-heavy soil found in NB river valley forests.

Hostas aren't native but are naturalized throughout New Brunswick and perform exceptionally as shade groundcovers. Choose smaller varieties like 'Blue Mouse Ears' or medium-sized 'Halcyon' for under trees, as giant hostas may struggle with root competition. Plant them in groups of 3–5 for a bold-textured groundcover effect. In NB, slug damage can be an issue due to the Maritime humidity — use iron phosphate bait early in the season.

For areas with slightly more light, **barren strawberry (*Waldsteinia fragaroides*)** produces cheerful yellow flowers in spring and forms an evergreen mat that persists through NB winters. **Lily of the valley** thrives in deep shade and spreads vigorously — almost too vigorously, so contain it with edging or use it where aggressive spreading is welcome. Groundcover installation under trees typically costs **\$8 to \$15 per square foot** in New Brunswick, including soil amendment. Avoid piling soil over tree roots — add no more than 2 inches of compost, and plant small plugs directly into existing soil pockets between roots.

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Q11

How do I create a pollinator-friendly garden in New Brunswick?

Creating a pollinator-friendly garden in New Brunswick means planting a diversity of native flowering plants that bloom in succession from May through October, providing continuous nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators throughout the Maritime growing season. NB's native plant communities already support rich pollinator populations — your garden can extend that habitat right into your yard.

Start with **native NB plants as your foundation**. Wild bergamot, bee balm, New England aster, black-eyed Susan, purple coneflower, and wild columbine are all native to the Maritime provinces and co-evolved with local pollinators. Native plants produce four times more pollen and nectar than non-native ornamentals, and local bee species are specifically adapted to access them. Plant in **clusters of at least 3–5 of the same species** — pollinators find and work large patches more efficiently than single scattered plants.

Plan for continuous bloom across the entire growing season. Early spring (May): wild columbine, Virginia bluebells, and native willows provide the first food after winter. Early summer (June–July): bee balm, wild bergamot, and lupines peak. Mid-summer (July–August): black-eyed Susan, purple coneflower, and Joe-Pye weed draw monarchs and swallowtails. Fall (September–October): New England aster and goldenrod are critical — they provide the final nectar that helps bees build winter stores. Goldenrod is often blamed for allergies (that is actually ragweed) and deserves a prominent place in NB pollinator gardens.

Include plants of different heights and flower shapes to attract diverse pollinators. Tubular flowers like bee balm attract hummingbirds. Flat, open flowers like black-eyed Susan attract butterflies and short-tongued bees. Tiny clustered flowers like wild bergamot and goldenrod attract native solitary bees and beneficial wasps. Adding flowering shrubs like **winterberry holly, serviceberry, and native dogwoods** provides additional food sources and nesting habitat.

Avoid pesticides and herbicides entirely in your pollinator garden. Even organic insecticides like pyrethrin kill beneficial insects. Tolerate some leaf damage — a few chewed leaves mean caterpillars are feeding, and caterpillars become butterflies. Leave some bare soil patches for ground-nesting bees, which make up 70% of NB's native bee species. Leave plant stems standing through winter — many native bees overwinter in hollow stems.

A pollinator garden in New Brunswick costs **\$500 to \$2,000 for a 100-square-foot bed** using nursery-grown native plants. Look for native plant nurseries in the Maritimes rather than big-box garden centres, which typically carry cultivars bred for appearance over pollen production. Plant after the last frost — mid-May in Saint John, late May in Fredericton — and water consistently through the first summer to establish deep roots before NB's harsh winter.

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Q12

What is the best foundation planting plan for a New Brunswick home?

The best foundation planting plan for a New Brunswick home uses a layered approach with evergreens for winter structure, flowering shrubs for seasonal colour, and low perennials or groundcovers along the front edge — all selected for the specific hardiness zone, sun exposure, and soil conditions at your property. Foundation plantings are the first thing visitors see, and in NB's climate, they need to look good through 250–300cm of snowfall and temperatures that can drop to -30C.

Start with the back layer — evergreen anchors. Plant these closest to the house, choosing species that mature at roughly two-thirds the height of your foundation wall. **Upright yews (Taxus)** are the classic NB foundation evergreen — they tolerate pruning, handle shade, and stay green year-round. For sunny exposures, **dwarf mugo pine** or **globe cedar** provide low, rounded forms. Space them 3–4 feet from the foundation wall to allow air circulation and prevent moisture problems against siding. Never plant large-growing trees or shrubs tight against a

house — a common NB mistake that leads to expensive siding and foundation repairs.

The middle layer adds seasonal interest. Compact hydrangeas like 'Bobo' or 'Little Quick Fire' bloom from July through September and handle NB's acidic soil perfectly. Spirea 'Little Princess' delivers pink summer blooms and tidy form. For fall and winter interest, **winterberry holly** produces spectacular red berries that persist after leaves drop, visible against snow from December through March. Plant both male and female winterberry for berry production.

The front edge layer uses low perennials and groundcovers to soften the bed edge and suppress weeds. Catmint, daylilies, coral bells (Heuchera), and creeping phlox all work well. Keep this layer under 18 inches tall so it doesn't obscure the shrubs behind. In shaded foundations (common on the north side of NB homes), hostas, astilbe, and ferns create lush textured edges.

Practical NB considerations matter enormously. Place beds at least 12 inches from the foundation to allow water drainage. Account for snow load from roof runoff — don't plant brittle shrubs directly under drip lines. Improve acidic clay soil (common in Fredericton and river valleys) with compost before planting. Mulch with 3 inches of bark mulch, kept 4 inches away from plant stems to prevent rot.

Professional foundation planting in New Brunswick runs **\$1,500 to \$5,000** depending on the home's size and plant choices. A typical 50-foot foundation bed needs 3–5 evergreen anchors, 5–8 flowering shrubs, and 15–25 perennials or groundcovers. Plant in early June or early September — both are excellent planting windows in NB that allow root establishment before the stress of summer heat or winter cold.

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When is the right time to plant perennials in New Brunswick spring?

The ideal time to plant perennials in New Brunswick spring is from late May through mid-June, after the last frost date has passed and soil temperatures have warmed to at least 10C. Planting too early risks frost damage to tender new growth, while waiting too long pushes plants into the heat of summer when they must establish roots and cope with stress simultaneously.

New Brunswick's last frost dates vary significantly by location. **Saint John and the Fundy coast** typically see the last frost around May 15. **Fredericton and the Saint John River valley** average May 20. **Northern NB — Bathurst, Campbellton, and the highlands** — may not be frost-free until June 1. These are averages, and NB's Maritime climate can deliver surprise late frosts, so watching the actual forecast matters more than following a calendar date rigidly.

Soil readiness is just as important as air temperature. Before planting, test your soil by squeezing a handful — if it forms a muddy ball that doesn't crumble, it's too wet and working it will damage soil structure. NB's clay-heavy river valley soils and spring snowmelt can keep ground saturated well into May. Sandy coastal soils near Moncton, Shediac, and Miramichi drain and warm faster, often allowing planting a week or two earlier than clay-based inland locations.

There are some perennials you can **plant earlier than the last frost date.** Cold-hardy species like hostas, daylilies, peonies, bleeding heart, and ornamental grasses can go in the ground 2–3 weeks before the last expected frost because their root systems tolerate cold soil. These tough perennials are already dormant-hardy and benefit from the cool, moist spring conditions that help roots establish before top growth demands energy.

More tender perennials — lavender, some echinacea varieties, and ornamental salvias — should wait until after the last frost and until soil has genuinely warmed. In zone 4a–4b inland NB, this often means the first week of June is safest. Planting in cool, wet soil promotes root rot in species adapted to warmer conditions.

New Brunswick also offers an excellent **fall planting window in early September** that many gardeners overlook. Perennials planted in September get 4–6 weeks of warm soil to establish roots before freeze-up, then emerge the following spring with established root systems. Fall planting is particularly effective for peonies, irises, and spring-blooming perennials.

When you do plant, **water deeply at planting and maintain consistent moisture for the first 3–4 weeks.** NB typically receives adequate rainfall (1,100–1,200mm annually), but June can have dry stretches. Mulch with 2–3 inches of bark mulch to retain moisture and moderate soil temperature through the growing season. Budget **\$500 to \$2,000 for a 100-square-foot perennial bed** including plants and soil amendments.

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Q14

How do I design a raised vegetable garden for NB's short growing season?

A raised vegetable garden is one of the best strategies for NB's short 120–150 day growing season because raised beds warm up 2–3 weeks earlier than ground-level soil, extending your effective planting window and allowing you to grow heat-loving crops like tomatoes, peppers, and squash that struggle with New Brunswick's cool springs. Proper design makes all the difference between a productive garden and a frustrating one.

Size and placement matter most. Orient beds north-south to maximize sun exposure through the day. Standard dimensions of **4 feet wide by 8 feet long** allow you to reach the centre from either side without stepping on soil. Build beds **12 to 18 inches tall** — the extra height warms soil faster in spring and improves drainage during NB's wet spring snowmelt. Position beds in the sunniest part of your yard — vegetables need a minimum of 6–8 hours of direct sun, and NB's growing season is too short to waste on partially shaded locations.

Material selection for NB's climate is critical. Cedar and hemlock are the best untreated wood choices — they resist rot naturally and last 8–12 years in Maritime conditions. Avoid pressure-treated lumber for food gardens. A 4x8 cedar raised bed costs approximately **\$300 to \$700 in New Brunswick**, depending on wood quality and height. Composite lumber and galvanized steel are longer-lasting alternatives at higher upfront cost. Whatever material you choose, it must withstand NB's freeze-thaw cycles and 250–300cm of annual snowfall.

Fill beds with a quality growing mix, not native NB soil. The ideal blend is roughly 60% topsoil, 30% compost, and 10% perlite or coarse sand. New Brunswick's native soil is typically too acidic (pH 4.5–6.0) and too heavy with clay for optimal vegetable growing. Most vegetables prefer pH 6.0–7.0, so you may need to add garden lime to

raise the pH. Get a soil test through the NB Department of Agriculture — it costs under \$30 and tells you exactly what amendments you need.

Season extension techniques are essential in NB. Use **cold frames or hoop tunnels** over raised beds to start planting 3–4 weeks earlier and extend harvest 3–4 weeks later. A simple PVC hoop with row cover fabric costs under \$50 per bed and can push your last frost date back to late April while protecting fall crops into November. Plant cool-season crops (lettuce, peas, spinach, radishes) in early May under cover, then transition to warm-season crops (tomatoes, peppers, beans) after the last frost in mid-to-late May.

Space plants more intensively in raised beds than in traditional rows — the enriched soil supports closer spacing. Use succession planting to maximize the short season: plant lettuce in early May, replace it with beans in late June, and follow with fall spinach in August. This approach can yield **three harvests from one bed** in NB's compressed growing season.

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Q15

What ornamental grasses grow well in New Brunswick landscapes?

The best ornamental grasses for New Brunswick landscapes include Karl Foerster feather reed grass, switchgrass, blue oat grass, and prairie dropseed — all rated to zone 4 or colder and capable of handling NB's Maritime humidity, heavy snowfall, and acidic soils. Ornamental grasses provide three-season movement and texture that most perennials simply cannot match, and their dried winter forms add critical structure to snow-covered NB gardens.

Karl Foerster feather reed grass (Calamagrostis 'Karl Foerster') is the number one ornamental grass for New Brunswick. Hardy to zone 3, it grows in a tight upright column 4–5 feet tall with feathery plumes that emerge in June

— weeks earlier than most grasses — and persist through winter. It tolerates NB's clay soils, handles wet spring conditions, and stays upright through Maritime winds without flopping. Plant it in groups of 3–5 for maximum visual impact along driveways, walkways, or as a privacy screen.

Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) is a native North American grass that thrives across all of New Brunswick's hardiness zones. Varieties like 'Shenandoah' offer stunning red-burgundy fall colour, while 'Heavy Metal' provides steely blue foliage and a stiff, upright habit. Switchgrass tolerates everything from sandy coastal soils near Shediac to heavy clay around Fredericton. It's drought-tolerant once established and provides excellent winter interest with its golden-tan dried foliage and airy seed heads.

Blue oat grass (*Helictotrichon sempervirens*) is a compact, mounding grass growing 2–3 feet tall with striking silvery-blue foliage. Hardy to zone 4, it performs well in Moncton and Saint John's zone 5 areas and in sheltered spots in zone 4 Fredericton. It demands well-drained soil — plant it on slopes or in raised beds rather than in low-lying wet areas. Blue oat grass pairs beautifully with purple coneflower and black-eyed Susan in mixed perennial borders.

Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) is a fine-textured native grass that forms elegant 2-foot mounds of hair-thin foliage. It's hardy to zone 3, tolerates poor soil, and produces a distinctive fragrance in late summer that some describe as buttered popcorn. It's slower to establish than other grasses — expect 2–3 years to reach full size — but once mature, it's virtually maintenance-free and lives for decades.

For NB's wetter areas, **blue joint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*)** is a native Maritime species that naturally grows in New Brunswick's meadows and stream edges. It tolerates poorly drained clay soil and seasonal flooding that would kill most ornamental grasses. Ornamental grass planting costs **\$15 to \$40 per plant** for gallon-size containers, and most NB gardens benefit from 5–15 grasses depending on the design. Cut all grasses back to 4–6 inches in early April before new growth emerges — leaving winter stems standing provides insulation and wildlife habitat through NB's long cold season.

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How do I plan a cutting flower garden in NB zone 5?

A cutting garden in NB zone 5 should focus on prolific, long-stemmed flowers that bloom in succession from late June through September, giving you a steady supply of fresh bouquets throughout the Maritime growing season. Zone 5 areas like Moncton, Saint John, and the Fundy coast offer NB's longest growing season at 140–150 days, making them ideal for cutting garden production.

Design the garden for production, not display. Unlike ornamental borders, cutting gardens should be laid out in straight rows with 18–24 inch spacing for easy harvesting and maintenance. A 4x8 or 4x16 raised bed works well, oriented north-south for even sun exposure. Full sun — 8 or more hours daily — is essential for maximum flower production. Plan for **10 to 15 different varieties** blooming at different times to ensure you always have something to cut from late June through first frost in late September.

Early season (late June–July) flowers include peonies (plant in fall for blooms the following year), sweet William, foxglove, and snapdragons. Peonies are superstars in NB zone 5 — they produce abundant, fragrant blooms and last for decades once established. Start snapdragons indoors 8–10 weeks before the last frost (mid-March for a mid-May transplant) to get early blooms.

Mid-season (July–August) is peak cutting season. Zinnias are the ultimate cutting flower — they're heat-loving, prolific, and come in every colour. Direct-sow after the last frost (around May 15 in Saint John) in successive plantings every 2 weeks through mid-June for continuous harvest. Dahlias are another mid-season powerhouse — start tubers indoors in April and transplant after frost risk passes. In NB zone 5, dahlias bloom from August through frost and must be dug up and stored over winter. **Cosmos, sunflowers, and lisianthus** round out the mid-season lineup.

Late season (August–September) relies on asters, chrysanthemums, and late-sown zinnias. Celosia and statice provide unique textures and dry beautifully for winter arrangements. Ornamental grasses like Karl Foerster add dramatic vertical elements to autumn bouquets.

Growing tips for NB's climate. Start heat-loving annuals (zinnias, cosmos, dahlias) indoors 4–6 weeks before the last frost to maximize bloom time in the short season. Use season-extending row covers in spring and fall to add 3–4 weeks on each end. Fertilize every 2 weeks with a balanced liquid fertilizer during peak growing season. Deadhead religiously — or better yet, keep cutting blooms for the house, which naturally encourages more flower production.

A productive cutting garden in NB zone 5 costs **\$200 to \$500 in annual seed, bulb, and plant purchases** for a 100-square-foot bed, with initial raised bed construction adding \$300 to \$700. The reward is weekly bouquets from

late June through September — a luxury that would cost \$20 to \$40 per bouquet at a NB florist.

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Q17

What bulbs should I plant in fall for spring blooms in New Brunswick?

The best fall-planted bulbs for New Brunswick spring blooms are tulips, daffodils, crocuses, alliums, and grape hyacinths — all of which need a cold winter dormancy period that NB's climate delivers in abundance. Plant them from mid-September through late October, before the ground freezes, and they'll reward you with the first colour of spring starting as early as late March for crocuses and continuing through May for late tulips.

Timing is critical in New Brunswick. Plant bulbs when soil temperatures have cooled to below 15C but before the ground freezes solid — typically **September 15 through October 31** across most of the province. Northern NB (Bathurst, Campbellton) should plant on the earlier side, while coastal areas around Saint John and Moncton can push into early November in mild years. Bulbs need 12–16 weeks of cold soil to develop roots and set flower buds, so planting too late means poor spring performance.

Crocuses are the earliest spring bloomers in NB, often pushing through melting snow in late March to early April. Plant them 3–4 inches deep in clusters of 15–25 for visual impact. Species crocuses (*Crocus tommasinianus*) naturalize beautifully in NB lawns and garden edges, multiplying each year. They're hardy to zone 3 and virtually indestructible in Maritime conditions.

Daffodils (Narcissus) are the most reliable large bulb for New Brunswick. They bloom from mid-April through May, are completely deer and rodent resistant (toxic to both), and naturalize over years into larger clumps. Plant 6–8 inches deep and 6 inches apart. Choose a mix of early, mid, and late varieties — 'February Gold' (despite the name, it blooms in April in NB), 'Ice Follies', and 'Cheerfulness' — to extend the bloom window to 6 weeks.

Tulips are NB's showpiece spring bulb, blooming from late April through late May. Plant 6–8 inches deep — deeper planting in NB helps protect against frost heave and extends bulb life. Triumph and Darwin hybrid types are the most perennial in NB's climate, returning for 3–5 years. Species tulips like *Tulipa tarda* and *T. turkestanica* are even more persistent, naturalizing in well-drained NB soils for a decade or more. Be aware that deer, squirrels, and voles love tulip bulbs — consider planting in wire mesh cages or interplanting with daffodils as a deterrent.

Alliums (ornamental onions) bloom in late May to June, bridging the gap between spring bulbs and summer perennials. 'Purple Sensation' and 'Gladiator' produce dramatic purple spheres on tall stems. Plant 6 inches deep. They're deer and rodent proof and thrive in NB's acidic soil.

Budget **\$50 to \$150 for a generous spring bulb display** in a typical NB garden, purchasing 100–300 bulbs depending on type and size. Buy from reputable suppliers — bargain bulbs often produce smaller, weaker flowers. Store purchased bulbs in a cool, dry place until planting day, and add a tablespoon of bone meal to each planting hole for strong root development.

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Q18

How do I design a rock garden on a sloped yard in New Brunswick?

A rock garden is one of the best solutions for a sloped yard in New Brunswick because it controls erosion, requires minimal maintenance, and thrives in the well-drained conditions that slopes naturally provide — turning a landscaping challenge into an attractive, low-care feature. NB's abundance of natural fieldstone and the province's alpine-adapted native plants make rock gardens a natural fit for Maritime landscapes.

Start by assessing your slope. Gentle slopes (less than 3:1 ratio) can be planted directly with rocks and plants. Steeper slopes may need terracing with stone to create planting pockets and prevent soil erosion during NB's

heavy rains and spring snowmelt. For slopes steeper than 2:1, consider building low retaining walls (12–18 inches) at intervals to create level planting terraces. The goal is to slow water runoff and create stable pockets where plants can root deeply.

Choose rocks that look natural in the NB landscape. Locally sourced granite fieldstone is the most authentic and cost-effective choice — it's abundant throughout New Brunswick and weathers beautifully. Select a variety of sizes, from small accent stones to large anchor boulders (18–36 inches). Bury each rock at least one-third into the slope so it looks like a natural outcrop rather than sitting on the surface. Group rocks in odd numbers and angle them to mimic natural ledge formations.

Plant selection for NB rock gardens focuses on tough, low-growing species. Creeping thyme, sedum, creeping phlox, and hens-and-chicks are classic rock garden plants that handle NB's freeze-thaw cycles and well-drained slope conditions. Native options include **wild columbine** (tucks beautifully into crevices), **bearberry** (an evergreen native groundcover hardy to zone 2), and **sweetfern** (a fragrant native sub-shrub that stabilizes slopes with its root system). For vertical accents, plant dwarf conifers like mugo pine or dwarf Alberta spruce at focal points.

Drainage is already your ally on a slope, but you still need to manage water flow during NB's intense rainstorms and spring thaw. Position larger rocks to deflect water around plantings rather than through them. Create small gravel swales between planting areas to channel excess water safely downhill. Avoid placing fine soil in exposed areas — it will wash away. Instead, use a planting mix of 50% coarse sand, 30% compost, and 20% topsoil tucked into pockets between and behind rocks.

Mulch rock gardens with 1–2 inches of pea gravel or crushed stone rather than bark mulch. Organic mulch retains moisture against plant crowns, promoting rot in the low, cushion-forming plants typical of rock gardens. Stone mulch also stays in place on slopes better than bark, which washes downhill during heavy Maritime rains. A rock garden on a typical NB slope costs **\$15 to \$35 per square foot** depending on stone sourcing and plant density, with local fieldstone significantly cheaper than purchased landscape stone.

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What are the best drought-tolerant perennials for sandy soil in coastal NB?

The best drought-tolerant perennials for sandy coastal New Brunswick soil include **sedum**, **catmint**, **lavender**, **Russian sage**, and **blanket flower** — all of which actually prefer the sharp drainage that sandy soil provides and tolerate the salt air, wind exposure, and periodic dry spells common along the Fundy coast, Northumberland Strait, and Acadian shores near Shediac, Miramichi, and Bathurst.

Sedum (Stonecrop) is arguably the most reliable perennial for sandy NB coastal gardens. Both tall varieties like 'Autumn Joy' (18–24 inches, blooms August–October) and creeping types like 'Dragon's Blood' (3–4 inches, blooms June–July) thrive in sandy, well-drained soil and actually perform worse in rich, moist conditions. They store water in succulent leaves, tolerate salt spray, and are hardy to zone 3 — handling everything from Shediac's zone 5b to Bathurst's zone 4a without issue.

Catmint (Nepeta 'Walker's Low') produces lavender-blue flower spikes from June through September in sandy soil with virtually no supplemental watering after the first year. It's deer-resistant, rabbit-resistant, and tolerates the alkaline-leaning conditions sometimes found in coastal sandy soils. Cut it back by half after the first flush fades in July and it rebounds with a second heavy bloom that lasts until frost. In NB's maritime humidity, good air circulation around catmint prevents the occasional powdery mildew issue.

English lavender (Lavandula angustifolia) can succeed in coastal NB zone 5 areas with sandy soil — the key is sharp drainage and winter protection. Varieties like 'Hidcote' and 'Munstead' are the hardiest, rated to zone 4–5. Sandy coastal soil is actually ideal for lavender because it hates wet feet, and NB's acidic soil needs lime amendment (lavender prefers pH 6.5–7.5). Mulch with gravel rather than bark, and avoid cutting into old wood in fall. Lavender is borderline in NB and may need replacement every 4–5 years in harsher winters.

Russian sage (Perovskia atrifoliosa) creates a stunning silvery-blue haze from August through October. It's drought-tolerant, deer-resistant, and thrives in poor, sandy soil — rich soil actually causes weak, floppy growth. Hardy to zone 4, it performs well along NB's coast and in sheltered zone 4 locations inland. Cut to 6 inches in early spring as new growth emerges from the woody base.

Blanket flower (Gaillardia) and **coreopsis** are two more outstanding choices for sandy coastal NB gardens. Both bloom non-stop from late June through frost, tolerate poor soil, and handle salt exposure. Sea thrift (*Armeria*) is a natural fit — it grows wild on coastal bluffs throughout the Maritimes and produces pink globular flowers on 6-inch stems from May through July.

For native drought-tolerant options, plant **bayberry** (a coastal NB native shrub with aromatic grey berries), **sweetfern** (fragrant groundcover shrub), and **wild bergamot**. A drought-tolerant perennial garden in sandy coastal

NB costs **\$500 to \$1,500 for a 100-square-foot bed** and requires significantly less watering and maintenance than a traditional garden — a practical advantage for seasonal cottage properties along the NB coast.

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Q20

Can I create a Japanese-inspired garden that survives New Brunswick winters?

Yes, you can create a beautiful Japanese-inspired garden that survives New Brunswick winters by selecting cold-hardy substitutes for traditional Japanese plants and focusing on the design principles — asymmetry, simplicity, and natural stone — rather than specific species. Many classic Japanese garden elements translate perfectly to NB's zone 4–5 climate with thoughtful plant choices.

Start with the hardscape framework, which is the foundation of Japanese garden design and is completely climate-independent. Natural stone — granite boulders, flat stepping stones, and gravel — forms the garden's bones and looks stunning year-round, including under NB's heavy snowfall. Source local NB granite and fieldstone, which has the weathered character prized in Japanese aesthetics. Create a **dry stream bed** with river rock and gravel to suggest flowing water without the maintenance of an actual water feature (which would freeze solid 5 months of the year in NB). A simple stone lantern or basin adds authentic Japanese character.

Evergreen structure is essential in Japanese gardens and critical for NB's long winters. Replace traditional Japanese black pine with **mugo pine** (pruned into cloud-form shapes called niwaki), **dwarf Alberta spruce**, or **yew (Taxus)**. These NB-hardy evergreens can be sculpted through Japanese pruning techniques to create the organic, asymmetrical forms that define Japanese gardens. **Eastern white cedar** pruned into a layered form substitutes beautifully for Japanese cedar. Rhododendrons — which prefer NB's acidic soil — replace traditional azaleas and provide both evergreen structure and spring blooms.

Japanese maples are the biggest challenge in NB's climate. Standard Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) are marginal in zone 5 and will die in zone 4. However, several strategies work. Plant in a sheltered microclimate — a south-facing spot protected from winter wind by a building or fence. Choose the hardiest cultivars like 'Bloodgood' or 'Emperor I'. Wrap with burlap in November. Alternatively, substitute **Amur maple (*Acer ginnala*)**, hardy to zone 2, which offers similar small stature and brilliant fall colour, or **cutleaf staghorn sumac** for a dramatic architectural effect.

Groundcovers and understory plants complete the scene. Moss is iconic in Japanese gardens, and NB's Maritime humidity actually favours moss growth — encourage it in shaded areas by keeping soil moist and acidic. **Hosta** varieties provide the bold, sculptural foliage associated with Japanese woodland gardens. **Ferns** — particularly native maidenhair fern and ostrich fern — create lush, layered understory planting. **Iris** (especially Japanese iris and Siberian iris, hardy to zone 3) are essential flowering accents.

Design principles to follow: Embrace asymmetry — group rocks and plants in odd numbers (3, 5, 7). Leave intentional empty space (*ma*) — gravel areas raked into patterns. Create borrowed scenery (*shakkei*) by framing NB's natural landscape as a backdrop. A Japanese-inspired garden in New Brunswick typically costs **\$3,000 to \$10,000** depending on the amount of stone work, plant selection, and size, with the hardscape elements forming the largest portion of the budget.

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