The Ellen Giles Garden

University of Toronto
Student Family Housing
History

Built in 2003-04, the Ellen Giles Garden was originally 10,000 square feet of unused terrace until it was turned into the beautiful rooftop garden that it is today. It was named after the first Community Development Coordinator of Student Family Housing Admissions, Ellen Giles.

The green roof not only provides a safe and accessible space for residents of Student Family Housing, but it also provides great benefits to the environment. Green roofs help to improve air quality and lower city air temperatures.
Residents of both 30 and 35 Charles are welcome to use the garden during open hours. The garden is located on the 3rd floor of 30 Charles, adjacent to the Drop-In Centre. The garden has many picnic tables and benches. The garden also has a very large play area for children. Community & Recreation offers various children’s toys at the garden during Drop-In Centre hours and during afternoon and evening garden programs.
Native Plants

The roof garden features a number of plants that are native to this region of North America.
Native Plants

Native plants are well-adapted to our climate and often provide habitat for beneficial insects and birds.
Oakleaf Hydrangea

Shrub - Blooms late summer.

The leaves are lobed and resemble those of oak trees. The panicle flowers are greenish-white when they are young, picking up subtle shades of pink and brown as they grow.
Summersweet

Shrub - Scented flower blooms mid-summer. This plant is also known as pepper bush, is an ornamental shrub with spikes of spicy-smelling white flowers. Its attractive dark green foliage takes on a yellow to orange color in the Fall.
Solomon's Seal

Perennial - Flowers in spring
White bell-shaped blossoms dangle below attractive, arching stems. Flowers become bluish black berries in late summer.
Columbines

Perennial - Flowers in spring.
It blooms in a variety of colours during spring. The bell-shaped flowers are also a favourite to hummingbirds.
Obedient Plant

Perennial - Flowers mid to late summer.
Physostegia virginiana, commonly called the obedient plant, produces spikes of attractive flowers.
Black Snakeroot

Perennial - Flowers late summer.
Depending on variety, leaf colors range from bright green, to burgundy, to chocolate brown.
Bigroot Geranium

*Perennial - Geranium macrorrhizum*

The blooms can be shades of pink, purple, or white, and are arranged in loose clusters atop erect stems.
Plantain Lily

*Perennial - Hosta plantaginea*

This hosta has bright yellowish-green, ribbed, heart-shaped leaves and beautifully scented white flowers.
Coral Honeysuckle

*Perennial-Lonicera sempervirens*

This beautiful, slender, climbing vine is frequently visited by hummingbirds. It has showy, trumpet-shaped flowers, red outside, yellow inside.
Yellow Corydalis

Perennial-Pseudofumaria lutea

This plant produces bright golden yellow flowers. It blooms over a long period of time, from late spring through frost.
Plant covered roofs significantly improve air quality and lower temperatures, reducing energy consumption, smog formation and respiratory health problems in the process. This local green roof has the dual purpose of improving the environment while it provides safe and accessible green space for roughly 2000 residents.