

What is a Gardener? There is more to it than you think!

Gardening is a lot of hard work and planning! This results in beautiful gardens which are not just esthetically pleasing but have many therapeutic attributes.

The landscaping of all the gardens at Dom Lipa were planned, sketched, and excavated by our President Josephine Muhic Pellettier with some help by a few fellow dedicated FAMILY COUNCIL gardeners. Jo, as we call her, used to wheel her mother around Dom Lipa and always remembered the comment her mother made to her: "There is nothing to look at but grass".

Out of love for her mother and the other residents of Dom Lipa, Jo began digging in the hard clay soil riddled with stones and rock, and with her vision created the first and largest perennial garden at Dom Lipa, which was named "THE FAMILY COUNCIL GARDEN". She purposely located it right next to the sidewalk so residents could enjoy the sensory experience of seeing, touching and smelling a variety of lovely plants. But Jo didn't stop there. Now Dom Lipa has numerous, beautiful, large gardens all around the property, that are solely maintained by our President and a few volunteer gardeners. We invite you and your loved ones to come for a walk around Dom Lipa and enjoy an incredible botanical experience!

An old overgrown weedy garden, by the ravine fence created and maintained by a resident (who sadly passed away last year) was just recently restored. This neglected area required a lot of work since old roots and suckers had to be pulled and pruned. The whole area was weeded and plants transplanted. A portion of this area was mulched and sod was installed to make it tidy and easier to maintain in the future.



Resized Garden with Sod Installation

Last year the FAMILY COUNCIL Volunteer Gardeners accumulated a total of 133.5 hours for the gardening season. As of July 1, 2023 we have already worked 76.5 hours gardening and maintaining the perennial and vegetable gardens at Dom Lipa.

Although we are avid gardeners, we are not professionals. However, we thought it would be interesting to google "Gardener" (Indeed Career Requirement, 2022) and share some of the results with you.

What is a Gardener? What are their responsibilities?

A gardener is a professional who works closely with plants and maintains gardens. They can work for individuals, for public spaces like parks and botanical gardens. They are responsible for the following:

1. Trimming and shaping

Many gardens and green spaces have grass, trees and shrubs. A gardener may be responsible for ensuring the plants stay clean and presentable. For trees and shrubs, the gardener may keep the plants in a certain shape, or ensure branches and leaves don't obstruct walking paths.

2. Weeding and cleaning

Weeds are invasive plants that grow when they're not intentionally planted. They can steal the nutrients and water from other plants, so gardeners spend time identifying and removing weeds to protect other trees, flowers and shrubs. Besides removing weeds, gardeners can also remove trash, fallen branches, leaves, and add mulch to the gardens.

3. Soil management

Some plants thrive and grow better when there are nutrients in the soil, so gardeners may add nutrients by amending the soil.

5. Watering

Plants require specific and consistent water, and it's part of the gardener's job to ensure they receive it. Gardeners can do this by watering plants with a watering can or hose when needed.

6. Harvesting produce

If a gardener works in a garden that produces fruits or vegetables, they may spend some of their time harvesting the produce.

7. Landscape design and installation

Landscaping is the process of designing an outdoor space, and a gardener may take part in the design and installation process. This may include planning where to plant seeds, and determining where paths go throughout the space. Landscaping isn't a task that all gardeners take part in, but some can, depending on the space in which they work.

Organization and designing

Organizational skills can help a gardener find the right tools and know where to plant each flower, shrub or tree. Plants can grow better when they're planted with the right companions, so it's important that gardeners use organization and garden designing skills to group plants together. For example, if a gardener was designing a home garden for a

chef, they may group herbs together close to the kitchen door so the chef can pick some when they're cooking.

Critical thinking

Plants can face a variety of problems, including pests, bugs, diseases and improper nutrition. Critical thinking is the ability to identify a problem, recognize the causes of the problem and implement solutions. Gardeners can use critical thinking to identify problems with plant growth and implement solutions in time to save the plant from wilting.

8. Benefits of working as a gardener

- *Continuous learning:* As a gardener, you can constantly learn about new plants and methods for care. If you enjoy learning about new things and developing your skills, gardening may be right for you.
- *Time outside:* Gardeners often spend most of their day outdoors, surrounded by plants and breathing in fresh air.
- *Physical activity:* Being a professional gardener can improve your physical health, as you may walk through the garden, climb ladders and transport heavy bags of soil. This can help you get your daily exercise while at work.
- *Relaxing atmosphere:* Unlike other work environments, gardening is often low-stress and relaxing. Being around plants for most of the day may help you feel more relaxed than if you worked in a busy office, a hospital or a restaurant.

Boy the above descriptions of a professional gardener sounds like the Dom Lipa FAMILY COUNCIL head volunteer gardener and her crew.

