

Living in Greater Vancouver means sharing space with a rich cast of urban wildlife. Raccoons that learn where your compost is, busy Douglas squirrels, songbirds that depend on berry-bearing shrubs, and the occasional coyote passing through alleys — these encounters can be charming or frustrating depending on how you design your yard. Done well, landscaping can reduce conflict, boost biodiversity, and create a garden that feels alive without feeling chaotic. Done poorly, it becomes a daily skirmish over trash bins, pet safety, and damaged plantings.

This article walks through practical, experience-tested approaches for landscaping in Vancouver BC, with attention to both aesthetics and coexistence. Whether you plan a full landscape installation, are searching for landscaping services in Greater Vancouver BC, or are just Googling Landscaping near me, these ideas will help you make informed choices and get better results from contractors like Luxy Landscaping or other local pros.

Why design for wildlife rather than against it

Many homeowners instinctively reach for exclusion: high fences, metal netting, predator decoys, motion lights that run all night. Those tactics can work short term, but they often create other problems — stressed wildlife that searches harder, visual clutter, and yard features that age poorly. Designing with wildlife in mind means shifting from reactive fixes to anticipatory design: place food and shelter where you want them, remove attractants, and create barriers that fit the scale and behavior of the animals you want to deter.

The math of attractants tends to be simple. A single overflowing compost or an unsecured bird feeder can feed dozens of raccoons and attract coyotes to your property edges. A tidy yard with predictable plantings and secured bins reduces visits dramatically. In my experience working on urban lots, properties that combine good plant selection with practical barriers see a 60 to 80 percent drop in nuisance visits within a season.

Know the local players and their habits

Not all wildlife behaves the same, and solutions must match local habits. In Greater Vancouver you will commonly encounter raccoons, squirrels, crows and ravens, various songbirds, raccoon dogs in some areas, urban foxes and coyotes, and deer in neighborhoods near greenbelts. Smaller species like voles, mice, and garter snakes are common under dense groundcover. Each group responds to different cues.

Raccoons are dexterous, nocturnal, and motivated by calories. They learn quickly which bins open and which fences can be scaled. Coyotes are opportunistic predators attracted by small pets and abundant rodents. Deer browse shrubs and may return nightly to nibble tender new growth. Birds respond to canopy structure and food resources, while pollinators are drawn to continuous bloom and pesticide-free nectar corridors.

Practical strategies that work

Start by auditing your property with a simple, methodical eye. Note where wildlife enter, what they eat on your property, and where they shelter. Is the compost within reach of raccoons? Are berry-producing shrubs close to property edges? Is there a gap under the fence? Documenting three to five key problems will focus a contractor or DIY plan more than vague concerns.

Below is a short checklist you can use during that audit. <https://seoneoapi.blob.core.windows.net/landscaping-in-vancouver-bc/landscaper/landscaping-in-vancouver-bc-small-space-solutions.html> Use it when contacting landscaping services or when planning landscape installation work.

- confirm primary issues: pests, pet safety, plant damage, or desire for more birds and pollinators
- map entry points and weak barriers, including gaps under fences and overhanging trees
- locate all food sources, intentional and accidental: bird feeders, compost, fruit trees, pet food

- note shelter spots: dense ivy, brush piles, under-deck spaces, hollow trees
- prioritize actions by safety and ease: secure bins, prune overhangs, then adjust plantings

Plant choices that reduce conflict and increase value



Plant selection is the single most effective long-term tool. The right mix will satisfy your aesthetic goals while being resilient to browsing and habitation. Vancouver's climate, maritime and relatively mild, supports a wide palette of native and adapted plants. However, not every popular shrub should be used at the property edge.

If you want to encourage birds and pollinators while discouraging deer and raccoons from lingering near your home, layer the planting. Taller native trees and large shrubs establish a canopy and screening effect. Mid-layer shrubs provide food for songbirds. The lowest layer can be hardscaped or planted with groundcovers that are unpalatable to deer, such as low-growing sedums or ornamental grasses.

Here are five plant recommendations that perform well in Greater Vancouver and support wildlife without encouraging nuisance behavior.

- red-flowering currant (*ribes sanguineum*): early nectar for pollinators, shrub form, not typically heavily browsed
- oregon grape (*mahonia aquifolium*): evergreen, winter berries for birds, spiny foliage deters deer
- salal (*gaultheria shallon*): native groundcover with berries for birds and a dense carpet that reduces rodent foraging paths
- pacific ninebark (*physocarpus capitatus*): robust native shrub, good structure for nesting birds
- sword fern (*polystichum munitum*): understory evergreen that stabilizes soil and provides cover without being a major food source

Trade-offs: some berry-producing plants will attract birds, which is desirable, but they can also draw seed-eating mammals. Place those species away from composts, vegetable gardens, and garbage bins.

Hardscape and barrier design that respects wildlife behavior

When people first think about barriers, they imagine walls and high fences. In practice, smart hardscaping uses sightlines, materials, and subtle elevation changes to guide animal movement while preserving a welcoming garden.

For small mammals like raccoons, a rigid-lidded compost and a locked bin are the most effective deterrents. Elevated planters with smooth sides make climbing harder; concrete or metal edging prevents burrowing. For coyotes and foxes, the solution is less about height and more about reducing attractants and visibility to prey. Keep small dogs and cats supervised during dawn and dusk, and do not leave pet food outdoors.

Fence advice by animal: deer can jump or push through flimsy fences; a three-rail fence around vegetable patches is often insufficient. Planting dense hedges with a tough, thorny inner layer gives better protection and an attractive boundary. Raccoons are climb-savvy; a well-installed metal cap on fence posts and an angled top section can reduce crossing. Consider motion-activated lights and water sprays for temporary problems, but avoid constant bright lights which disrupt nocturnal wildlife and neighborhood dark-sky goals.

Water features: attractors and integrators

A small pond or water bowl will attract birds and beneficial insects, but it will also draw mammals. Placement matters. Locate permanent water features near the center of the yard rather than at the edges where coyotes and raccoons feel safer. Shallow basins with sloped edges reduce the drowning risk for wildlife and pets. Avoid ornamental fish that become a feeding incentive for herons and raccoons unless you have a secure shallow pond with protective netting.

Maintenance patterns shape behavior

Wildlife responds more to patterns than to single events. If your yard offers food every night, animals will habituate quickly. Changing maintenance routines can break that learning. For example, if you must feed birds, switch to a seed mix less attractive to ground-foraging mammals, and install feeders that shimmy on poles designed only for perching birds. Clean up fallen fruit daily during harvest season. Secure compost after dark.



Mulch depth matters: a two to three inch layer suppresses weeds without providing a thick insulating layer for rodents. Avoid large brush piles or stacked firewood near the house. If you need to store materials, keep them on pallets and away from foundations. Trim ivy and creepers; they hide dens and make access under sheds easy.

Working with contractors and landscape installers

Landscape installation in Greater Vancouver BC requires contractors who understand local wildlife dynamics and municipal bylaws. Ask prospective landscaping services about specific experience with urban wildlife. A reputable firm like Luxy Landscaping or similar local companies will offer integrated solutions: plant palettes, hardscape options, and maintenance programs that reduce wildlife conflicts.

When interviewing contractors, ask for case examples, not glossy portfolios. Request a site-specific plan that shows where bird-attracting plants will go in relation to composts and bins, where fences and gates will include wildlife-aware details, and a maintenance schedule that prevents seasonal attractants. Good contractors will offer choices and explain trade-offs, for example, recommending an evergreen hedge that offers winter screening but requires higher initial cost and periodic pruning.

Permits and bylaws: a quick note

Before installing large fences, lighting, or water features check your municipality. Vancouver and surrounding municipalities have regulations about fence heights, water runoff management, and tree protection. Removing or heavily pruning a street tree or a protected native can trigger fines. Ask your contractor to obtain permits or advise you on restrictions. Professional landscapers usually handle this as part of landscape installation.

Pet safety and coexistence

Pets often inadvertently create wildlife conflicts. Outdoor cat access increases predation on songbirds. Small dogs left unsupervised can attract coyotes. Consider secure outdoor enclosures, raised beds that are harder for cats to access, and motion-sensor lighting only at problem locations to avoid stressing neighborhood wildlife. Microchipping and secure fencing protect pets without resorting to harmful deterrents.

When to call a wildlife professional

If you find an injured animal, denning under your porch, or a situation involving a potentially dangerous animal like a raccoon acting aggressively or a coyote that shows no fear, call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator or municipal animal services. Landscaping services can implement preventive measures, but they are not a substitute for wildlife removal professionals.

Practical project timeline and budget considerations

A typical property upgrade focused on wildlife-aware landscaping might look like this: a one-day audit and plan, a week of permit processing if needed, two to five days for major hardscape and fence work, and several days for planting. Expect plant establishment to take at least two full growing seasons to realize the design benefits.

Budget varies widely. Small-scale measures such as secure compost lids, reinforced fencing, and a curated planting bed can start in the low thousands of dollars. Full landscape installation with screening trees, lighting, irrigation, and hardscape can run into tens of thousands. Quality pays off. Cheaper materials and poor installation often mean recurring costs from replacements and ongoing wildlife problems. If you search Landscaping near me, compare three estimates and look for clear scopes of work and maintenance plans.

A few real-world examples

A Kitsilano townhouse I consulted on had nightly raccoon visits that emptied soft compost and scattered garbage. The homeowner replaced the compost with a sealed tumbling bin, added a self-closing metal gate, and planted a band of oregon grape and pacific ninebark away from the bin to draw birds elsewhere. Within two weeks visits dropped and the resident songbird population increased along the hedge.

In a North Shore garden, a family wanted more pollinators but fewer deer visits to their vegetable beds. We created a pollinator corridor using native currant and salal on the property perimeter, and surrounded the vegetable patch with a short, dense hedge of thorny roses and a secondary chicken-wire barrier buried six inches. The deer browsed the outer plants but left the protected vegetable patch alone. The family accepted the visual trade-off of a denser boundary in exchange for productive beds.

Final persuasion: small changes, big effects

Urban wildlife landscaping in Greater Vancouver is not about perfect separation. It is about intentional design that reduces negative encounters while celebrating urban biodiversity. Securing bins, choosing the right plants, adding humane barriers, and working with experienced landscaping services will give you a yard that stays beautiful and functional. If you want professional help, look for local firms experienced with landscape installation and wildlife-aware designs. Companies such as Luxy Landscaping have handled projects across Vancouver neighborhoods and can document similar work they have done.

A modest investment in planning and plant selection pays dividends every season: fewer nighttime raids, more birdsong during the day, and a garden that feels resilient. Start with an audit, prioritize easy wins, and then phase in larger installations. Your yard can be a peaceful meeting place between humans and the wildlife that already calls Greater Vancouver home.

Luxy Landscaping

1285 W Broadway #600, Vancouver, BC V6H 3X8, Canada

+1-778-953-1444

canadianluxyhomes@gmail.com

Website: **<https://luxylandscaping.ca/>**