



# GREENER PASTURES






IN Old Montréal

## Nature Hunt in the Historic Quarter

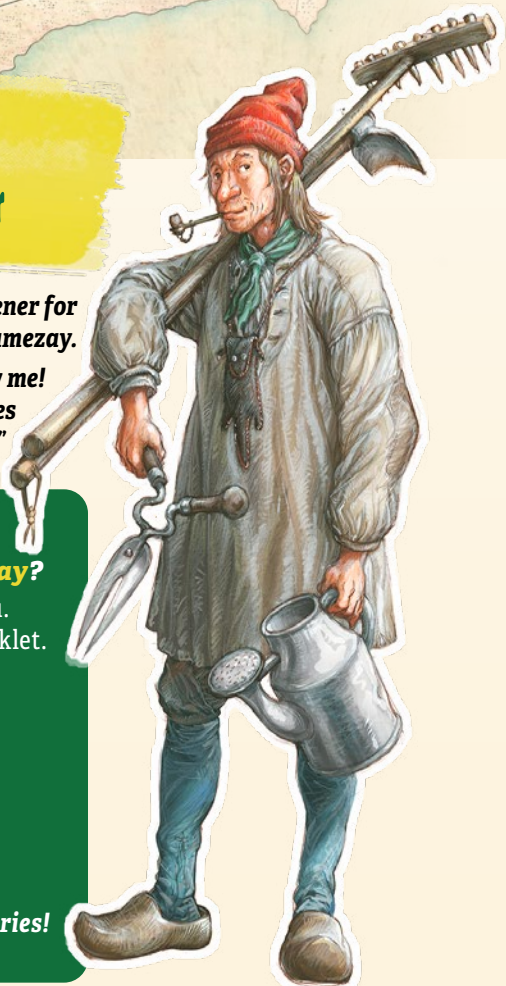
*“Greetings! I am **Pierre Beau**, the gardener for the Governor of Montréal, **Claude de Ramezay**.*

*New to the neighbourhood? Follow me!  
I’ll show you some of the lovely green spaces  
from my day, back in the 18th century.”*

**Do you have an eye for nature?**  
**Nature from **times past** or from **today**?**

-  Go to each site proposed by Pierre Beau. Follow the **map on the back** of this booklet.
-  Take the time to observe each place you stop at.
-  Answer the questions.
-  Learn more about current environmental trends and issues.
-  Think about the actions you can take to protect the environment.

**Enjoy your observations and your discoveries!**



# 1. Champ-de-Mars terrace



**TIMES PAST:** *“In my day, every house had a garden. But growing wheat required fields! These ones were located outside the city’s fortifications. In front of us, between the Petite Rivière (present-day Saint-Antoine Street) and the foot of the mountain, there were sprawling fields, big gardens and orchards to feed Montréal’s population”.*



## Observing traces of the past or a historical fact

Today, the city has grown far beyond the boundaries of its fortifications, taking over the fields and orchards of the past. However, you can still see vestiges of the masonry walls built between 1717 and 1738. At the beginning of the 19th century, the faubourgs became densely populated and the outdated fortified outer walls were dismantled. A large terrace was created and a line of trees was planted along Saint-Antoine Street to stabilize the soil.



## Observing nature today

Still today, we can see two lines of trees on the Champ-de-Mars terrace. This method of planting trees creates a beautiful canopy—a refuge for birds, insects and rodents—and helps to improve biodiversity.

What do you think are some of the other benefits of lines of trees?

- Breaking the wind
- Retaining soil and preventing erosion
- Creating a noise barrier



*View of the Champ de Mars,  
Montréal*  
Robert Auchmuty Sproule, 1830  
© Château Ramezay – Historic  
site and museum of Montréal  
1998.3089

## Term related to environmental issues:

# BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity refers to the diversity of the living world. The greater the number of different animal and plant species in an area, the greater the biodiversity. Rich biodiversity helps to preserve a healthy environment.



## Taking action

And you? What actions can you take to contribute to greater biodiversity where you live?

- Plant a vegetable garden
- Plant flowers in the squares around trees on the street
- Set up an insect house
- Plant heritage fruits and vegetables
- Avoid using pesticides

Other:

## 2. Place Marguerite-Bourgeoys



**TIMES PAST:** *“In my day, there were no wooded public parks within the city’s walls! The green spaces were private gardens. But there were lots of them! For onlookers strolling the city streets, only a few fruit trees were visible over garden walls”.*



### Observing traces of the past or a historical fact

At this commemorative site, you can observe a fountain sculpture by Jules Lasalle in tribute to Marguerite Bourgeoys. Recruited by the sister of Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve as a teacher, Marguerite Bourgeoys came to the small colony of Ville-Marie in 1653. Visionary and courageous, she did not back down from any challenge. She had the first stone chapel in Montréal erected, set up a school where she taught reading, writing and counting to children, and prepared older girls for their future responsibilities. She also founded the Congrégation de Notre-Dame, a non-cloistered religious community for women.

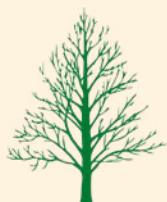


### Observing nature today

Have you noticed how nice and cool it is here? It’s a lot hotter at Place Vauquelin and Place Jacques-Cartier, and yet they’re only a few metres away.

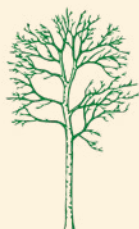
The type of soil and the trees play a large part in this.

Can you spot the most common tree in Place Marguerite-Bourgeoys?  
Using the pictograms at the top of next page, can you identify the species?



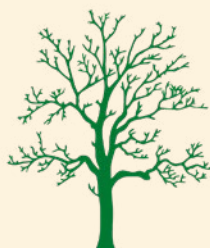
**A**

American ash



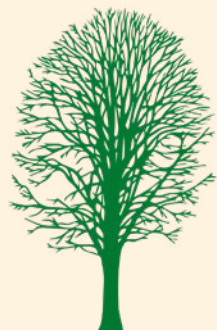
**B**

White birch



**C**

Grey oak



**D**

American linden



**Term related to environmental issues:**

## **HEAT ISLAND**

Urban heat islands are zones that are hotter than their surrounding area. And they're harmful to our health.



### **Taking action**

And you? What actions can you take to reduce heat islands close to where you live?

Find the intruder in these statements:



Paint your parking space a light colour



Having a green roof on your house



Put ice cubes on your balcony

# 3. Place des Vestiges and Promenade du Vieux-Port



**TIMES PAST:** *“The location of De la Commune today was once the ‘commons’: the common space where cows and sheep grazed in the early days of Ville-Marie.*

*It was common to cross paths with animals in my day. Many people, like Mr. De Ramezay, had a farmyard and every now and then, one of his chickens or pigs would escape! Under the law, if you came across an escaped pig, it was yours for the taking”.*



## Observing traces of the past or a historical fact

In the 18th century, the bank of the St. Lawrence River was at the foot of Rue de la Commune. In fact, the present-day “Old Port” is an embankment. Large boats dropped anchor a little further out and the inhabitants and merchants transported their goods in smaller boats right up to the sandy bank.



## Observing nature today

Today, between Promenade du Vieux-Port and Rue de la Commune, you can see a big linear park. At this location, filled with trees and bushes, grain silos were built at the beginning of the 20th century. In particular, grain silo #2 located right in front of Marché Bonsecours. The Place des Vestiges is named after the vestiges of the foundations of this silo, which were covered up in 2004.

Striving to become the leading grain port in the world, when Canada was considered the world’s bread basket, Montréal built five massive grain elevators in that period.



Château Ramezay  
Edgar Gariépy, October 1917  
© Château Ramezay – Historic  
site and museum of Montréal  
2020.14.1

## Trend related to environmental issues:

# SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Food self-sufficiency is the capacity of a country or region to produce all of the food needed to feed its population without having to import food from other countries. Since certain foods are not adapted to our climate, focussing on growing indigenous species ensures better yields. This type of agriculture also promotes biodiversity because it requires fewer chemical inputs, such as pesticides.



## Taking action

And you? Do you know where the foods you eat come from?

Yes  Some  No

Can you recognize the foods that are indigenous or well-adapted to our climate? Find the intruders in this list.

- |                                   |                                   |                                |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beans    | <input type="checkbox"/> Potatoes | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avocados | <input type="checkbox"/> Apples   |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corn     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cocoa    |                                |

# 4. Place Jacques-Cartier



**TIMES PAST:** *“In my day, this large square was home to the gardens of Mr. de Vaudreuil, the Governor-General of New France. Imagine this square covered in green!*

*Following a major fire, nature was replaced by a big market: the Marché Neuf. That put an end to horticulture in the square; now, it received market gardeners from the surrounding areas!”*



## Observing traces of the past or a historical fact

In order to survive, the first colonists of New France had to adapt their food and grow the indigenous plants cultivated by the First Nations. However, as soon as the colony was better organized, seeds were imported from France. The inhabitants were able to quickly reconnect with their traditional French diet.

If you carefully observe the ground toward the southern end of the square, you'll see dark grey slabs that form a massive “H.” This marks the site of the Château de Vaudreuil (built in 1724 and destroyed by fire in 1803), the Montréal residence of Philippe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, Governor-General of New France from 1703 to 1725.



## Observing nature today

Today, very little green can be found in this square. No more horticulture or large vegetable garden. There's only one kiosk, offering maple products and a few local vegetables.

1. *Plan, élévation, profils et terrains appartenant à la succession de Monsieur le Marquis de Vaudreuil*  
Jean-Baptiste Angers et René de Couagne, July 17, 1726  
© Archives nationales de France, Paris, Cartes et plans, Marine

2. *Place Jacques Cartier*, Detroit Photographic Co., 1901  
© Château Ramezay – Historic site and museum of Montréal, 1998.1879





## Trend related to environmental issues:

# LOCAVORE

Governor-General Vaudreuil's garden was not the only one to disappear in Montréal.

With urbanization and industrialization, our food products sometimes have to travel very long distances to get to our plates. The “eat local” or locavore movement seeks to prioritize foods that are grown, processed or prepared close our homes. Not all foods grow all year or even grow at all in our climate. To be a locavore, you have to choose foods that are available according to each season.



## Taking action

And you? What do you or can you do to eat locally produced foods?

- Plant herbs on your balcony
- Sign up for a local food basket
- Participate in a community garden
- At the market, buy fruits and vegetables grown in Québec
- Go to U-pick farms to gather seasonal fruits
- Ask your grocer to offer more foods produced in Québec

# 5. The Governor's garden



**TIMES PAST:** *“Before we say goodbye, let me introduce you to the most beautiful garden of all: mine! Oops. sorry, I meant the garden of the Governor Claude de Ramezay and his wife, Marie-Charlotte Denys de la Ronde!*

*Look how organized everything is! The rows are so straight. The flowerbeds so symmetrical. Just like the classic French gardens of the King at Versailles.*

*This garden changes from season to season: come back regularly to see how it evolves”.*



## Observing traces of the past or a historical fact

The garden in Monsieur de Ramezay’s time was a lot bigger than the one today. It extended over 4,200 m<sup>2</sup>, that’s five times bigger than the present-day garden. Take a close look at the Château Ramezay, the southernmost window on the west wall at garden level was once a door that linked the vegetable garden to the kitchen, and was used by Monsieur de Ramezay’s cook to harvest vegetables for the Governor’s table.

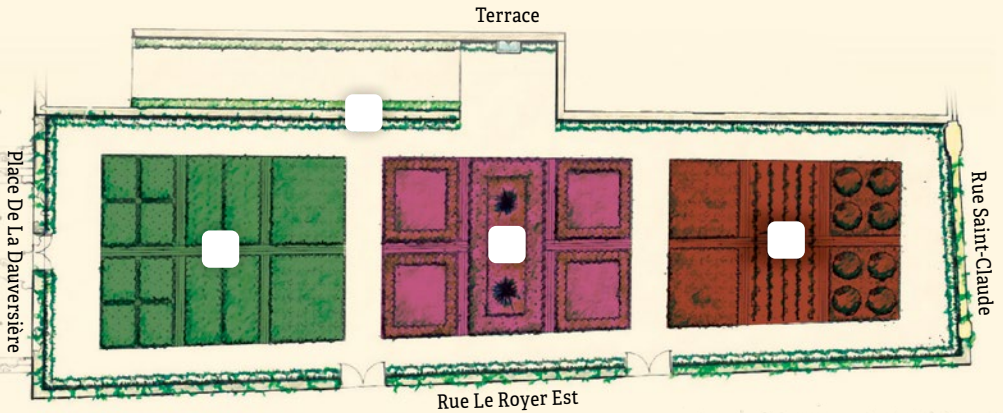


## Observing nature today

Today, like in the 18th century, the garden had different functions. Wander around it and connect each of its sections to its function. Write the corresponding letter in the correct location on the map at the top of next page.

- A** Vegetable garden
- B** Ornamental garden (to add a little beauty!)
- C** Orchard
- D** Medicinal and aromatic herbs

## Map of Château Ramezay's garden



*Le Château Ramezay en 1706,*  
François Villemaire  
© Château Ramezay – Historic  
site and museum of Montréal

### Term related to environmental issues:

## GREENING

Greening seeks to increase the number of plants in a location in order to prevent heat islands, and to improve the quality of the water, air and biodiversity.

First a garden, then an extension of the Marché Neuf and Marché Bonsecours, this green space was subsequently turned into a multilevel car park! Hard to believe, but it was only restored as a garden in 2000!

Proof that we can transform the city with greening projects!



### Taking action

And you? What do you or can you do to contribute to greening?

Learn about and support greening projects in the neighbourhood

Participate in climate marches

Create a "green squad" at school

Toss some seed bombs here and there

# Activity map



- 1. Champ-de-Mars terrace
- 2. Place Marguerite-Bourgeoys
- 3. Place des Vestiges and Promenade du Vieux-Port
- 4. Place Jacques-Cartier
- 5. Governor's garden

p-11-12: A-D-B-C (from left to right)

p-7-8: Avocados, cocoa

p-5-6: D. American hinden. Put ice cubes on your balcony

erosion, creating a noise barrier

p-3-4: Breaking the wind, retaining soil and preventing

Answer key:

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HISTORIC SITE AND MUSEUM OF MONTRÉAL  
OLD MONTRÉAL

