

# FOOTPRINT

The trend was to pave over greenery in the name of development

## Kicking a keen sense of green to the curb

One woman's tale of liberation from asphalt



VANESSA FARQUHARSON  
Sense & Sustainability

permeable materials."

In the end, after getting bounced around by various representatives at City Hall, James finally reached an official in the mayor's office who agreed with her and, some time later, she got the permit. James was also informed that this project of hers would be the pilot for a revised by-law on green driveways.

"The thing is, we didn't get rid of the driveway, we just made it disappear," she said. "It's underneath a layer of PermaTurf, so it's still a load-bearing surface — a bit like hollow Lego."

The individual cells fit together in such a way that grass is able to grow between the spaces without getting crushed by a car's wheels. It therefore functions as a driveway, although James doesn't encourage people to park there and has put a few stones in place to block delivery trucks from pulling in.

"If more people did this, it would save the city money," she said of the process, which cost her about \$1,200 in total (but she got \$14,000 from the sale of the car). "When you look 25 years down the road at how many people will be living here, how many

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more hard surfaces will be built — there'll be a lot more stormwater runoff and we'll have to build more water filtration plants.

"But if we start using permeable materials for our driveways, that'll at least be a start."

So far, James has had only positive reactions from friends and neighbours.

"I think everyone in the neighbourhood has found this to be a very entertaining process," she said. "It's really nice — people we never really knew before are stopping and saying how much they like what we did."

Now that the transformation from driveway to garden is complete, James is moving on to her next project: transforming the empty garage into a cottage.

"With no car, we have no need for a garage," she said, "so we're hoping to turn it into an outdoor room, a bit like an urban cottage. Thankfully we don't need a permit for that."

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COURTESY FRANKE JAMES

Franke James' driveway-turned-garden, bottom, was the product of a desire to do environmental good — and some lobbying.

It all started when we decided to do the



HARDEST THING FIRST.

We knew that



BUT WAS THERE SOMETHING MORE?

SOMETHING THAT WOULD REALLY change our



We decided to sell THE SUV →



And since we didn't have a car, we didn't need a driver

We dreamed of replacing it with

WILD FLOWERS

"What? How can that be?"



This really BOTHERS my green conscience!

