

Discussion Questions

Plants of wetlands, gardens, and hard surfaces (Chapters 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, pp. 75-102)

Are losses of wetlands inevitable with urban expansion, considering most large cities are near the coast?

Gamma (landscape-level) diversity is thought to be lower in urban wetlands due to fragmentation and isolation. However, anthropogenic disturbances may maintain habitat heterogeneity (page 80). Is this human-induced habitat variability beneficial for urban conservation?

Why is biodiversity the goal in urban landscapes?

Should biodiversity be the goal, even if it is attained via human disturbance and includes non-native species?

If non-native plants growing in urban wetlands provide the same ecosystem services as native wetland plants, should they be considered just as valuable?

How would this value judgment translate into wetland management and conservation?

Could urban lawns and gardens be designed to be ecologically functional and viable in the urban environment?

Would these tiny patches have an impact on conservation at the landscape scale?

Considering horticulture is a business and driven by consumer demands, could consumer education (and/or better education for landscape professionals) help improve ecological friendliness and functionality of domestic gardens?

When discussing the biodiversity of planted areas, the authors claim that “the existence of such diversity may be without significant ecological value, even if species are numerous” (page 91). Do you agree or disagree?

Are urban gardens Potemkin facades?

Should hard surfaces be viewed as communities of rare rock outcrop specialists or novel anthropogenic habitats made up of non-native species and anectophytes?

Do these habitats have conservation value?

If you were to design a city from scratch, would you include green spaces or would you opt for an urban densification strategy?

If you did include green spaces, what purposes would they serve besides aesthetics?

What management practices (or lack thereof) would help fulfill these goals?

Could wetland conservation be easily integrated into your management strategy?