Gotland - Sweden´s Summer Island - Crowns the Winner of The World's Ugliest Lawn 2024

The island of Gotland has officially announced the winner of The World's Ugliest Lawn 2024, and the title has crossed continents to find its home in Birdlings Flat, New Zealand. The honour goes to Leisa Elliott, who proudly sports the pre-owned first prize T-shirt, generously passed on by last year's winner, Kathleen Murray.

Leisa resides in a small rural community on Kaitorete Spit, a stunning but rugged stretch of Canterbury coastline. Her water supply comes from a well, and she is steadfast in her commitment to water conservation. For Leisa, the idea of a lush green lawn has taken a backseat to her dedication to sustainable living.

The Jury's Motivation: Leisa Elliott, located along the rugged Canterbury coastline, has embraced a bold philosophy: let Mother Nature take the reins. In a region known for its fierce coastal winds and low rainfall, Leisa's lawn is a powerful statement.

Her property is a testament to resilience. The ground, parched and textured by the elements, is dotted with natural, weather-carved indentations and adorned with the muted colours of a landscape that thrives without human interference. Not a drop of irrigation graces her lawn—it's all up to the skies, and Leisa wouldn't have it any other way.

This commitment to water conservation is an inspiring example of living in harmony with one's environment. By choosing to forego the unnatural pursuit of a green lawn, Leisa demonstrates a deep respect for our planet's most precious resource. Her lawn may not win beauty contests, but it wins hearts for its message of sustainability and adaptability.

Congratulations and thank you, Leisa, for transforming an "ugly" lawn into a global symbol of environmental stewardship!

Honourable Mention: Brescia, Italy

The jury has also awarded an honourable mention to Emilia Vallara of Brescia, Italy. Emilia's entry is a garden where nature has been given free rein to flourish—or perhaps to conspire against anyone attempting to tread there! Here is how she described it:

"My garden is never watered. It only gets wet when it rains. The grass and wild plants are never cut; the terrain is rough. The grass hides large stones and holes; it is easy to fall."

The Jury's Motivation: Nestled in the heart of Brescia, Emilia Vallara's garden is a celebration of nature left entirely to its own devices. This rugged terrain, with its hidden stones, unpredictable holes, and untamed vegetation, offers a wild charm that defies traditional gardening norms. Never watered nor trimmed, the garden thrives solely on rain, embracing the raw beauty of self-sustaining wilderness.

Yet, this untouched haven is a testament to Emilia's commitment to letting nature take its course. Congratulations, Emilia, on creating a garden that truly embodies the untamed spirit of the land, where nature thrives unbridled and unapologetically!

A Global Celebration of Natural Lawns

The World's Ugliest Lawn competition is not just a tongue-in-cheek celebration of unconventional beauty; it's a rallying cry for sustainability and a deeper respect for the natural world. Each year, we are reminded that lawns don't have to be picture-perfect to be meaningful. Sometimes, the most powerful stories lie in the imperfections.

Gotland – where Viking-era history meets unique natural scenery

Apart from ugly lawns, Gotland is a paradise island with a unique wild character and a coastline punctuated with sandy beaches and sculptural sea stacks. Historically significant, its main town Visby is a Viking-era wonder and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Did you know, for example, that:

- The Pippi Longstocking TV series was entirely filmed in Visby and on other parts of Gotland.
- You'll find 92 medieval churches – dating from the 12th to the 15th centuries – dotted around Gotland.
- Gotland's coastline, if counting Fårö, stretches 800 kilometres

Worthy of a visit at any time of year, here are our top things to do on the island:

- Savour a meal at **Lilla Bjers**, an organic farm-to-table restaurant located 7 kilometres south of Visby. Enjoy innovative dishes inspired by Gotland's classic flavours, such as truffles and saffron, with ingredients sourced from their own farm and local small-scale producers. Recognised as Best Organic Restaurant in the European Organic Awards 2022.
- **Explore Gotland's natural beauty** through over 100 nature reserves, sea stack fields, and scenic trails. Marvel at iconic sea stacks like Hoburgsgubben, cycle the idyllic Eksta coast, or hike trails like Östkustenleden and Klintkustleden. With enchanting landscapes, sandy beaches, and accessible pilgrim routes, Gotland is perfect for outdoor adventurers.
- **Discover Gotland's rich cultural heritage** in UNESCO-listed Visby, the best-preserved fortified trading town in northern Europe. Explore the 13th-century city wall, Viking burial sites like Stenkyrka, and treasures at Gotland Museum's Fornsalen. Visit Stavgard Vikingagård for a hands-on Viking experience.

More information on Gotland: https://visitsweden.com/where-to-go/southern-sweden/gotland/

Press Images of Gotland: https://imagebank.sweden.se/my-selections/1gpnvjehii

For more information, interviews, or high-resolution images of theWorld´s Ugliest Lawn, please contact us.

Steve Robertshaw
Senior PR Manager UK
steve.robertshaw@visitsweden.com

Visit Sweden *has an official assignment from the Swedish government to market Sweden as a destination. Our vision is that Sweden by 2030 is the world's most sustainable and attractive destination built on innovation. Now more than ever, purposeful travel needs to be meaningful, conscious and creating lasting value with regard to our guests, the local community and our planet. Welcome to Sweden, a destination of a different nature.*

Additional assets available online: Photos (1)

https://press.visitsweden.com/2025-01-17-Gotland-Swedens-Summer-Island-Crowns-the-Winner-of-The-Worlds-Ugliest-Lawn-2024