

ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS

Improved Stream Health and Riverbank Stability

Restoring natural vegetation along riverbanks filters pollutants, reduces erosion and provides a healthier environment for fish and other aquatic species. For more information on what you can do, see www.livingbywater.ca.

Protects Natural Heritage

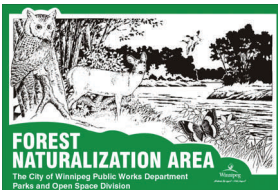
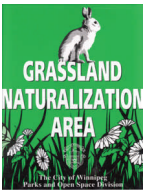
Naturalization preserves historic oak trees, reintroduces prairie grasses and wildflowers, restores majestic river bottom forests and healthy wetlands integrating these historic Manitoba plant communities into our urban environment for future generations.

Increased Biodiversity

Natural areas provide a place for a greater variety of wildflowers and other plants. These plants attract and sustain a diversity of birds and butterflies.

Improved Water Quality

Natural wetlands and naturalized retention basins remove nutrients and pollutants from run off water before it can flow downstream into our rivers and lakes.



Naturalization can make a forest or prairie come alive again!

For questions or concerns regarding Naturalization please contact:

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CITY OF WINNIPEG PARKS AND OPEN SPACE DIVISION

Naturalization and No-Mow Zones



Over the past few years you may have noticed changes in the way some of our parks and open spaces are being maintained. These changes may be related to a practice known as “Naturalization”.

Naturalization is a process by which a disturbed site is restored to its natural heritage and ecological function by encouraging the establishment of native plant species.

The City of Winnipeg is committed to protecting the health of our natural environment and ensuring these areas are functional for both wildlife and people to enjoy.

TYPES OF NATURALIZATION

No-mow or Reduced Mowing:

Eliminating mowing, reducing mowing or raising the height of cut are used primarily in the following three situations:

Along waterways such as rivers and creeks to provide vegetation that will improve water quality while also providing deeper roots to reduce erosion.

Under oak trees, because they need well aerated soil. Mowing beneath trees can compact soil causing branch tips to die usually beginning at the top of the tree and eventually killing it.

Along existing natural areas, reducing or eliminating mowing can provide a buffer zone that encourages native plant species to spread.

Tree Planting:

Each year, thousands of trees are planted along riverbanks to reduce erosion and improve stream habitat.

Prairie and Wetland Restoration:

Prairie grasslands and naturalized retention ponds are being introduced to protect our natural diversity, add beauty to our surroundings and improve our water quality.

COMMON PLANTS OF NATURALIZATION AREAS

Desirable Species:



Goldenrod, Aster, Fleabane, Wild Licorice, Prairie Sage, Milkweed, Bedstraw, False Solomon's Seal, Canada Anemone, Sedge, Rush, Big Bluestem

Trees and Shrubs:



Manitoba Maple, Green Ash, Bur Oak, Trembling Aspen, Pincherry, Chokecherry, Red Osier Dogwood, Buffaloberry, High Bush Cranberry

Weeds:



Canada Thistle, Dandelion, Sow thistle, Brome Grass, Quack Grass, Sweet Clover, Burdock

COMMON PROBLEMS

Naturalization is a long-term process and some areas can take many years to develop into vibrant and diverse natural communities.

The initial phases of naturalization can often result in weed problems. In the early transitional stage, invasive weeds such as Canada thistle may take advantage of a no-mow environment and become abundant. Mechanical methods such as hand pulling or cutting are often required to control these. Eventually, the transition will lead to a more stable and diverse collection of native plants, and weeds will be reduced.

Litter can also become a problem as vegetation easily collects paper or plastic refuse blowing in the wind. Dumping trash, grass clippings or other garden waste into these areas is illegal and also problematic. By properly disposing garbage, composting yard waste and not littering, everyone can do their part to help prevent and solve these problems.

The benefits of these natural areas to our well-being and the health of our environment outweighs the possible problems. With continued commitment from the Parks and Open Space Division, our natural landscape will be fostered and preserved for the future.