

Naturalize Your Yard



Benefits of Naturalization

Supports Biodiversity

Greater biodiversity, contributes to a healthy ecosystem

Attracts Birds and Other Pollinators

Restoring native habitats that have been lost due to development helps to support the local wildlife populations and pollinators like bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Reduces Maintenance

Naturalization can reduce maintenance costs when compared with traditionally manicured areas (mowing, fertilizers, pesticides, and water usage).

Nurtures Native Species

Native plants are well-suited to our unique growing climate. With the occurrence of Chinooks and the basic quality of our soil, plants suitable for Calgary are adapted to a unique growing climate.

Naturalization is Healthy

Naturalization promotes mental health and relaxation. It encourages more diverse recreational uses of a space.

Increases Curb Appeal and Property Value

Naturalization can help beautify your yard and add to the diversity of landscapes across Calgary.



What is Naturalization?

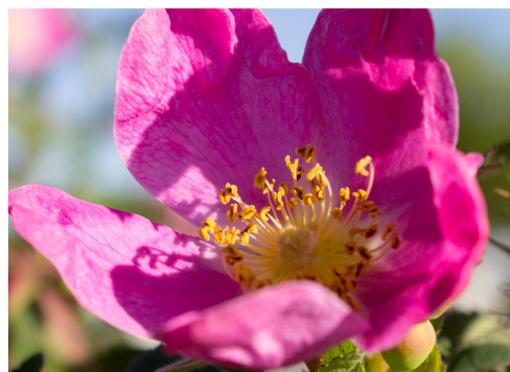
Naturalization is the process of reducing the amount of cultivated lawn in a yard and adding spaces that better represent the naturally occurring landscape of the region.

Naturalization takes research, planning and some initial work, but can result in an attractive, functional yard that is easy to maintain. In the face of pressures brought on by a changing climate and a growing city, naturalized areas support biodiversity and help keep our urban ecosystems healthy.

Things to remember when naturalizing your yard

- Provide ongoing maintenance and care while plants establish initially.
- Control the growth of noxious weeds.
- Distinguish landscaped, natural spaces using elements like borders and pathways.
- Plants and grasses over 15cm are permitted in maintained gardens that display purposeful design.

For more information: *The Alberta Weed Control Act; The City of Calgary Community Standards Bylaw.*





What Does Naturalization Look Like?

Variety of Plants

Consider incorporating more native perennials and grasses, with varying flower sizes and bloom times. This creates food and habitat for wildlife and reduces watering costs.

Size

You can have a small naturalized space in a corner of your yard or you can naturalize your entire yard. Ensure that your naturalized area shows elements of planning and design such as clear borders.

Location

You can create a naturalized yard anywhere on your property. If you want to add a boulevard garden immediately adjacent to your yard, contact 311 to learn about the approval process.

Early Years

Naturalized areas require watering and weeding until the plants establish. Given time, they will appear like a landscape that has always been there.

Site Maintenance

Naturalized areas don't look as formal or manicured as traditional horticultural practices, but they can still look intentional and stylish in their design. Once established, they may not require costly maintenance practices like fertilizing, or pesticide spraying.

Private Yard Naturalization Guidelines

Use the following guidelines to ensure the success of your private yard naturalization project.

1 Consider the overall goals of project

In addition to creating a beautiful outdoor space, consider what characteristics you would like to see in your yard (e.g. edible shrubs, increased biodiversity, low maintenance, pollinator habitat, enhancements to current design, etc.).

2 Plan and design your yard

Site preparation (removal of turf and weeds) is a critical step. Establish yard borders, choose the right plants, plan where to place vegetation, use hard and soft landscaping features, such as plants, shrubs, walkways and seating areas.

3 Consider your yard features

Use the unique features of your property to your advantage. Consider elements such as: property size, soil type, drainage requirements, sun exposure, existing vegetation, etc. Always contact Alberta One-Call before starting excavation or planting projects on your property.

4 Keep up with maintenance

Naturalization projects can take a few years. In the early stages, weed control, site maintenance and monitoring are essential. Naturalized areas require less maintenance in the long-term, but native plants may take multiple growing seasons to establish.

5 Consult local experts

Unsure about soil structure, planning and design or how to include naturalization on your private property? Explore the resources below or contact your local horticultural group or garden center for more information.

For more information visit calgary.ca/pollinators or calgary.ca/yardsmart

