

Naturalization

What is Naturalization?

Naturalization is a process of transforming a space into one that reflects naturally-occurring or non-invasive plant species including flowering perennials, grasses, shrubs, and trees. The goal in some naturalization projects may be to create specific landscape types such as Acadian Forest, wetlands, meadows, and riparian areas.



Why Naturalize?

Naturalization has numerous ecological, environmental, educational, and recreational benefits.

Ecological Benefits

Naturalization initiatives bring a diversity of plant species which provide the variety of stems, leaves, branches, flowers and fruits needed to provide food and shelter for a range of birds, mammals, and insects.

Environmental Benefits

Naturalization can improve air quality, reduce urban heat island effects, and mitigate stormwater runoff. It can also improve an ecosystem's ability to cope with extreme weather events and pest outbreaks.

Educational Benefits

Naturalization fosters education about nature and develops ecological literacy. These benefits can be bolstered by partnering with local school groups.

Recreational Benefits

Naturalization in parks provides opportunities for recreation in proximity to nature which promotes mental health and encourages a more diverse use of recreational space.

What does it look like?

Size and Location

Areas can be as small as a few square meters, or as large as a coastline. They can be in underutilized areas within parks or in the road right of way.

Early Years

Although areas can appear sparse and unkept during the first several years, they will blend-in and look natural over time.

Site Usage

Sites may be used for wildlife viewing, photography, nature appreciation, play, and relaxation.

Stewardship

Community leadership is needed for planting and on-going maintenance of naturalized areas.