



Hamilton-Halton
Watershed Stewardship Program

A Program of:



Stewardship...

is the act of caring for the land to the best of one's ability, to maintain it in a healthy state for today and for future generations.

We hope that you find this factsheet to be informative and useful.

Remember that your comments, suggestions and questions are always appreciated.

Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program

NATURALIZATION at Veterans Memorial Park in Dundas, Ontario

Naturalization is a new term for an old idea. When land is left to it's own devices– it isn't mowed, ploughed or cut, it changes. It grows plants. This is naturalization. Since the mid 1990's naturalization has been occurring in Veterans' Memorial Park in Dundas. Naturalization can be assisted by people adding plants, particularly shrubs, trees and attractive wildflowers, to the area. Scouts, nearby landowners, volunteers, the Town of Dundas and the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program worked together in the 1990's to plant within the naturalized floodplain in the park.



Adding trees and shrubs will speed up the time it takes for an area that is naturalized to change over from grass and wildflowers to shrublands or forest. Nevertheless, we are talking about a period of several years (5-25) from the time an area is left to go natural, whether trees and shrubs are planted or not, to a time when the area becomes shrubland or

forest. The time will depend on whether trees and shrubs are fast growing (such as poplars, willows or sumacs) or slow growing (such as pines, oaks and maples). It will also depend on whether there are shrubs and trees nearby that can naturally provide seed for the area.

For a time the area may, in a few people's opinion, look "weedy". There will be asters, goldenrods, grasses and many other waist-high plants. We recommend that those people be patient. In a few years, the land could be covered in trees and shrubs. In the meantime, those



"weeds" are plants that will be producing midsummer and fall flowers with bright yellows, purples, whites and blues. Goldfinches will be nesting and feeding in the naturalized area and sparrows will be collecting insect food. Toads and leopard frogs will search for bugs while butterflies and bees will drink nectar. A naturalized area is truly alive and vibrant.



Naturalization frequently has other benefits. Along a stream, the added vegetation helps to shade and cool the water, which is excellent for fish. The plants stop mud and pollution from running off of the land and into the water during rainstorms and spring melts. Shrubs and small plants that bend into the stream become overhead cover for fish resting in the stream.



Along the south or west edge of a woods, naturalization protects the forest from strong winds and the hot afternoon sun and creates new habitat for small wildlife. Naturalization also means that there is less



mowing and spraying of pesticides and herbicides which can save money and time. There are real benefits to naturalization– both environmental and economic. All it takes is the willingness to let it happen and the patience to let it run its full course.

Visit Veteran's Memorial Park today! It will be hard to imagine it was once, not so long ago, entirely covered in mowed grass and devoid of nature.

Photos supplied by Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program.

Interested in learning more about natural features on your property? Call to arrange a free on-site consultation!

Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program
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The Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program acknowledges the generous financial support of:



**TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation**



**GREAT LAKES
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