

# Certify Your Yard

To acknowledge your steps in encouraging and increasing biodiversity, FortWhyte Alive will endorse and certify your property.

To be certified, your habitat must provide food, water, shelter and space as suggested on the checklist. Once your project is complete, just fill out the checklist and send it along with your name, address, e-mail and three photographs of your yard to:

Attention: Naturescape Coordinator  
FortWhyte Alive  
1961 McCreary Road  
Winnipeg, MB R3P 2K9



FortWhyte Alive  
HUMAN. NATURE.

Naturescape  
bringing biodiversity home

## What's in it for you?

- Receive \$20 in Naturescape Backyard Bucks valid at the Nature Shop at FortWhyte Alive
- A certified Naturescape Garden sign
- Valuable coupons for:

### Shelmerdine Garden Center Ltd.

7800 Roblin Boulevard, Winnipeg, MB  
telephone: 895-7203  
www.shelmerdine.com

### Sage Garden Herbs

3410 St Mary's Road, Winnipeg, MB  
telephone: 257-2715  
www.herbs.mb.ca

### PrairieFlora

Wes and Aimee McDonald  
telephone: 1-877-645-0329  
www.prairieflora.com

### Prairie Originals

27 Bunns Road, East Selkirk, MB  
telephone: 1-866-296-0928

### Jensen Nursery & Landscaping Ltd.

2550 McGillivray Boulevard, Winnipeg, MB  
telephone: 488-5042

### The Nature Shop at FortWhyte Alive

1961 McCreary Road, Winnipeg, MB  
telephone: (204) 989-8355  
www.fortwhyte.org

Proudly sponsored by



Thank you for your interest in Naturescape—a new FortWhyte Alive program that inspires and assists people like you to improve the health of our habitat by increasing backyard biodiversity. Biodiversity is the wonderful and amazing variety of life on Earth. This includes where every species lives and how they interact with their environment. There are three levels of biodiversity; ecosystem diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity.

Ecosystem diversity is measured by counting all the ecosystems that exist in one area. An ecosystem is the interacting network of all living and non-living elements within a given space. A meadow, bog, lake, forest are all examples of ecosystems.

Species diversity is the number of species in a given area. Did you know that Manitoba is home to over half a million different species? By increasing biodiversity in your piece of the planet, you will be supporting the stability and resiliency of our natural ecosystem.

Genetic diversity refers to the availability of differing genes (the blueprint for organisms) within a population. The more genetic variation, the easier it is for species to adapt to changes in climate, for example.

## Why should you care?

Like all other organisms, humans are part of the web of life and depend on many different species for survival. We need insects to pollinate the crops, plants to purify our water, trees for oxygen production and climate control, bacteria and fungi for nutrient cycling, and ants and worms for soil generation. These are only some of the natural services that keep our planet healthy. Unfortunately, Manitoba's biodiversity is declining. Did you know that currently there are 41 critically endangered Manitoban species?

A yard rich in flora and fauna offers your family a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a "biological theatre". A diverse landscape can provide hours of delight watching butterflies flutter, birds flitter, bees buzz, and leaves quiver. So now is the time to start diversifying your space!

A biodiverse landscape should include water, food, shelter, and space.

### Water

Water is essential for life, but it is often difficult for urban wildlife to access because much of the standing water in cities is contaminated from street runoff and pesticides.

#### Providing water sources:

- **Install a bird bath.** Choose one with gently sloped sides and a rough surface to provide good traction for tiny feet. The deepest part of the bath should be about 7.5 cm or 3 inches. Remember to change the water on a weekly basis to prevent mosquito breeding.
- **Create a soggy spot for butterflies (permanent puddle).** Butterflies obtain important minerals from damp soil. Simply dig a hole in a sheltered corner of your yard and bury a container of sand up to its rim. Wet the sand thoroughly with water. Add some stones in and around the permanent puddle to provide landing pads.
- **Install a fountain or waterfall feature.** Make sure it uses a re-circulating pump for water conservation. Moving water is also a magnificent magnet for birds.
- **Add drippers, spitters or decorative pots and barrels containing water.** These elements are ideal for a small yard or patio.
- **Build a pond.** Ponds support numerous living things from amphibians, aquatic insects, minnows, plants, to birds and mammals. However, you need to ensure proper installation for animals to access and thrive. There are many books, workshops and knowledgeable garden centre staff that can help.

During the summer, about 1/2 of all municipal drinking water is applied to lawns and gardens.

### Food

Providing a variety of food sources is perhaps the easiest way to enhance the biodiversity of your yard.

#### Things to plant:

- **Nectar plants provide food for birds, butterflies and other insects.** Some examples of native flowers which are a good source of nectar include: goldenrod, Joe-pye weed, milkweed, pearly everlasting and giant hyssop. Tree sap is another form of nectar. Plant species such as: birch, basswood, Manitoba maple and showy mountain ash.
- **Flowering trees, shrubs and perennials provide pollen for insects.**  
**Trees:** aspen, willow, cottonwood and basswood  
**Shrubs:** Canada plum, speckled alder, Saskatoon, red-osier dogwood, pincherry, and chokecherry.  
**Perennials:** flowering plants

### Air

Out of sight, but top of mind. With climate change being our greatest environmental challenge, Naturescape encourages the planting of trees not only for biodiversity but also as natural carbon sinks that fix and store carbon as wood, while producing oxygen for you and your wildlife.

#### What you can do:

- **Plant a tree.** Consider planting hardy native trees such as, elm, ash, Manitoba maple, white spruce, oak, trembling aspen, and balsam poplar.

An average mature tree provides the daily amount of oxygen consumed by up to four people.

### Shelter

All animals and birds need places to hide from predators, raise their young and take cover from harsh weather. It's easy to add natural shelter into your backyard landscape.

#### Habitat is home:

- **Layer your planted areas.** Include trees of various heights, lower bushes, shrubs, tall grasses, and flowers.
- **Nest and roosting boxes.** This is an option for yards without snags. Annual cleaning will ensure they are attractive for rearing young.
- **Fallen log.** Habitat for insects, salamanders, decomposers and snails.
- **Craft a little stone pile.** Habitat for beetles and toads ... and chipmunks could use them as food caches.

### Space

Every creature needs a little space to call their own. This space, or territory, needs to provide species with food, water and shelter.

#### What you can do:

- **Leave a modest bright, open, sunny spot of drought tolerant grass mix or pesticide free ground cover.**

40% of a Robin's diet is made up of invertebrates such as earthworms, caterpillars and beetles. A pesticide-free lawn is the ideal habitat for those creatures!