FROM YOUR YARD TO OUR WATERWAYS

Protect drinking water with smart stormwater management at home

STORMWATER

After rains or snowmelt, stormwater flows over driveways, roofs, patios, lawns, sidewalks and streets. Along the way, stormwater picks up fertilizer, pet waste, pesticides, motor oil and dirt, carrying those pollutants to our waterways.

The US EPA estimates that pollutants carried by rain-water runoff account for 70% of all water pollution.

Rather than letting it flow, managing stormwater on your property can help prevent stormwater pollution from reaching our drinking water supplies. (And it can also help keep your foundation and basement dry.)

INFILTRATE, DON'T TREAT

One of the best ways to protect our drinking water supply is to imitate nature, allowing stormwater to infiltrate or sink slowly into the soil rather than running into catch basins or storm sewers.

3 WAYS THAT YOU CAN MANAGE STORMWATER AT HOME

1. RAIN BARRELS

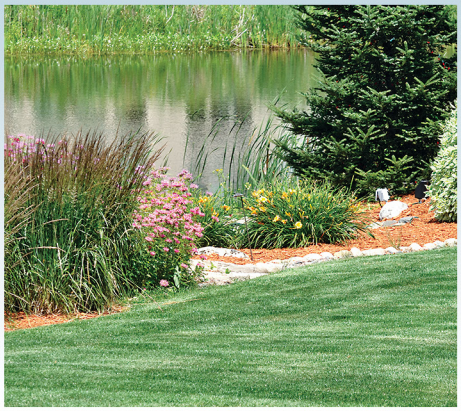
Capture rainwater from your roof and use it later when it's dry outside to give thirsty gardens, flowers and trees a drink.

- Rain barrels help keep excess water out of the sewer system when it rains. They also help prevent rain from becoming polluted stormwater runoff, the biggest remaining threat to clean rivers and lakes in the United States.
- Rain barrels can be purchased at home and garden stores or online and are typically connected to a roof downspout.

Check with your municipality – some offer rain barrels for sale or provide incentives.

2. BE NATURAL

Plant and maintain a buffer of taller vegetation (preferably Michigan native plant species) around the edge of your property and especially near the water to help slow runoff and provide added filtration.



- Native plant species are adapted to local soils, climate and environmental conditions. They need less fertilizer and are more drought and disease resistant.
- Native plants have extensive root systems that cut down watering needs, help infiltrate water back into the ground, minimize soil erosion and filter pollutants from runoff before leaving your property.

3. RAIN GARDENS AND SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING

Sustainable landscaping means using plants and soils to slow, spread and soak rainwater where it lands. This reduces the amount of stormwater runoff and helps prevent flooding while it prevents pollutants from reaching our waterways.

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RAIN GARDENS

Rain gardens are usually constructed on the downside of a slope on your property. These shallow ground depressions use native shrubs, perennials and flowering plants to absorb and filter rainwater in your yard. It is designed to temporarily hold and soak in rain water runoff that flows from roofs, driveways, patios or lawns.

RAIN GARDEN STATS:

- Remove up to 90% of nutrients and chemicals.
- Remove up to 80% of sediments from the rainwater runoff.
- Allow for 30% more water to soak into the ground than conventional lawns.

For rain garden information, tutorials and workshops, check out your local municipality's website or the watershed group in your area.

SOIL CONDITIONING

Compacted soil, such as clay, can be a barrier to absorbing stormwater. Soil must be able to filter and drain water easily.

You can transform your lawn into a stormwater sponge. Healthy lawns help absorb more rain, which reduces water pollution and the amount of water that can get into sewers. Healthy grass develops thick root systems that also help minimize soil erosion.

- Adding organic material, such as compost or mulch, to compacted soil will improve its physical qualities over time so that more water will infiltrate into the ground.
- Spreading compost, soil mixtures or organic material like mulch on your lawn can help create healthier grass with a thicker root system that helps choke out weeds and turns your yard into a water absorbing sponge.

Water moves through the environment into our waterways and is treated by our water treatment plants. Protecting the quality of this source water protects our future drinking water.

Use smart stormwater management at home to reduce stormwater runoff and keep pollutants out of our water sources.

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