

GO GREEN FOR STORMWATER!

What does it mean to make your home green for stormwater? Green stormwater practices around your home use plants, soils, and other elements to manage water quality and mimic the natural water cycle. Green stormwater practices retain, detain, filter, harvest, and infiltrate stormwater runoff to create healthier urban environments.

Incorporating green infrastructure provides many benefits such as improving water quality by removing pollutants, habitat preservation for native plants and animals, decreasing urbanization stream impacts, and overall enhancement of neighborhood aesthetics. The following is a list of management practices that landowners can incorporate on their own property to help control and keep stormwater clean. (Sources: Penn State Extension, United States Environmental Protection Agency)

- **Downspout Disconnect/Redirect** - If your downspouts are directed onto a paved or concrete surface or are directly connected to the storm drain system, look for opportunities to redirect them to lawn and garden areas if community ordinances allow. Just be sure that all downspouts are directed away from foundations to avoid basement flooding.
- **Rain Barrels** - Rain barrels capture and hold water until it can be used or slowly released into planted areas. For rain barrels to be effective at controlling stormwater, it is important to have a plan for using the water before installing one.
- **Planting A Stream Buffer** - Planting water loving trees, shrubs and/or other native plants is a great way to reduce stormwater runoff. If you have a stream on your property, planting along the stream will help prevent the stream from eroding away your property. The more plants the better! At the very least don't mow your lawn directly up to the edge of the streambank.
- **Meadows Plantings or Turf Alternatives** - If trees aren't an option on your property, adding other types of plants is a good substitute. Any areas where lawn can be replaced with native ornamental grasses, flowers, and/or shrubs will have a positive impact on controlling stormwater on your property. Whether large or small, these purposefully planted areas will increase the ability of the land to absorb water. Meadow/turf alternative areas can be a great way to reduce the amount of time you spend mowing the grass and can be placed in the areas that are the most difficult to mow.
- **Pervious Pavers** - Pervious pavers can look very similar to a traditional brick or stone patio, sidewalk, or driveway. The difference is that they are installed with a thick stone base that provides space for water to be stored until it soaks into the ground. They are great for

converting hard surfaces that usually make a lot of stormwater runoff, into a surface that absorbs, manages, and reduces that runoff. If you're interested in this, you should probably contact a professional landscaper.

- **Rain Gardens** - One of the best options for managing stormwater on your property is to install a rain garden. A rain garden is a depressed area in the landscape that collects rainwater from a roof, driveway or street and allows it to soak into the ground. Planted with grasses and flowering perennials, rain gardens can be a cost effective and beautiful way to reduce runoff from your property. Rain gardens can also help filter out pollutants in runoff and provide food and shelter for butterflies, songbirds and other wildlife.

Many of these projects you can tackle on your own. To learn how to build a rain garden on your own property, Warren County SWCD will be hosting the Master Rain Gardener program which is a 6 day course that takes place over 7 weeks. During the course, students are guided through the rain garden design and installation process by experienced regional professionals. The course costs \$50. Warren County residents are free by calling 513-695-1337 before registering and students are eligible for 50% discount by calling 513-772-7645. To register or for more information on the Master Rain Gardener program go to cincyraingardener.org



If you have complicated stormwater issues on your property, consider getting help from an engineer, Soil and Water District professional, OSU Extension professional, and/or landscape professional. Also, be sure to check local ordinances to ensure that different management practices are allowed in your area. For more information regarding green infrastructure for the home, Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District programs and/or technical assistance on water or soil questions, visit <http://warrenswcd.com> or call, 513-695-1337.