

DID YOU KNOW?
Sediment is the #1 source of pollution in our waterways!

What Is Stormwater Runoff?

Stormwater comes from precipitation and melting snow. While much of this water is absorbed into the ground in a natural environment, this is not always the case in developed areas. In a major storm event, excess runoff flows across the land and into waterways. Land use, steep slopes and paved areas all affect the quality of this stormwater runoff.

Why Is Stormwater Runoff A Problem?

Stormwater runoff can impact our homes and communities. During heavy rainfall events, flooding and erosion can occur. Stormwater also contributes to the pollution in our waterways. As rain falls, it picks up various contaminants along its path. Pet waste, litter, motor fluids, fertilizers, and soil are just some examples of the pollutants that enter our waterways through stormwater.

What You Can Do! Landscaping Solutions That Help Reduce Stormwater Runoff

Rain Barrels



Rain barrels are usually the size of 55 gallon drums and are repurposed to capture stormwater from roofs through a downspout. Water is saved in the barrel for later use in the garden or for slow release. (This water is NOT safe to drink!)

Image Credit:
 Elizabeth Rosser | Extension Educator

Planting Trees

Trees help slow down stormwater runoff. They work to capture and absorb rainwater, filter out pollutants, and infiltrate water back into the ground.

A single mature oak tree can absorb and evaporate over 40,000 gallons of water through its leaves each year!

Native Plants

An area planted with native grasses/wildflowers will absorb more water during rain events than a typical lawn with compacted soil and shallow roots.



Image Credit:
 Amanda Blaine | MWS Volunteer

Rain Garden

A rain garden is planted in a low-lying area to capture, filter and absorb rainwater. Rain gardens can filter motor oil residue which comes from driveways or capture the rain from your roof!

Simple Ways You Can Keep Stormwater Free of Pollutants

Fertilizers & Pesticides

Read labels correctly and apply the appropriate amount according to the manufacturer's directions. Contact your local Penn State Extension office for assistance. Excessive use of these chemicals can increase pollution in our waterways.

Car Washing

When you wash your car in the driveway, all that grime and detergent enters the stormwater system through storm drains. Instead, wash your car on the lawn or visit a local car wash where the water is recycled after use.

Pet Waste

Pick up after your dog and remove pet waste from your lawn for proper disposal, just as you would in a park.

