

BEST PRACTICES



Stormwater Runoff: The Home, Lawn & Garden Connection

We've all seen it: sheets of water running off driveways, patios, sidewalks and roads. What we often do not see is the pollution that the stormwater carries with it into the nearest stream, lake or Puget Sound.

Before there were rooftops, driveways, roads and parking lots, most of Thurston County was covered with multi-layered forests. When it rained, much of the rainwater never reached the ground because it was intercepted by leaves and branches in the forest canopy and evaporated. The rainwater that did reach the ground did so by slowly dripping through layers of branches and leaves and then onto the forest floor and infiltrating into the soil to become groundwater. The forest floor acted like a sponge because the decaying matter and the plant root network soaked up much of the rainwater. In this way, the rainwater was "managed" where it fell and rarely resulted in stormwater flooding or pollution.

Today, there are a wide variety of "green" stormwater solutions that homeowners can use to help manage stormwater runoff on-site, encouraging their landscape to function more naturally like a forest. Some practices may be easier to install and use than others, but what they all have in common is that they encourage rainwater to soak into the ground rather than running off into the stormwater system. Some easier green stormwater solutions include planting trees, adding compost to soils in your lawns or gardens and collecting rain water from roofs. Other practices may take more effort, planning and/or engineering, such as installing a rain garden, permeable pavers or a green roof.



Benefits of Rainwater Soaking in On-site:

- Reduce flooding
- Remove pollutants
- Replenish groundwater

You Can make a Difference at Your Home:

- Plant native trees or shrubs in your yard
- Improve soil health and water retention by adding compost
- Aerate your lawn to reduce soil compaction and improve the health of grass roots
- Direct downspouts into a rain garden, rain barrel, rock-filled trench or grassy area
- Install permeable pavers in walkways and/or driveways



Source: Stream Team News, Winter 2013