

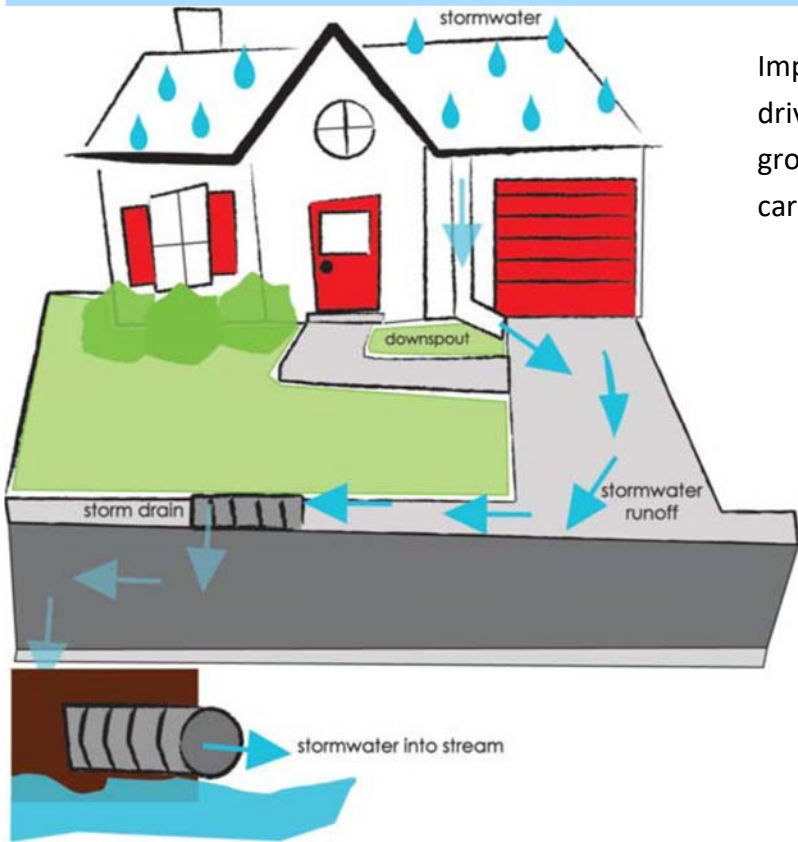
stormwater gardening simple . valuable . artistic expressive . beneficial . easy

a beautiful solution to stormwater pollution

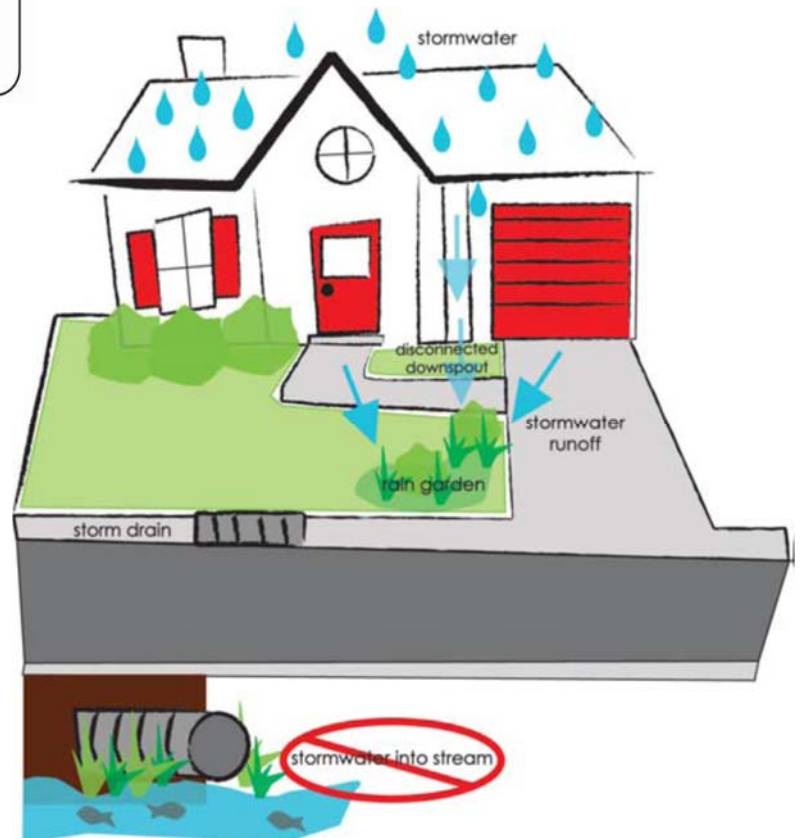
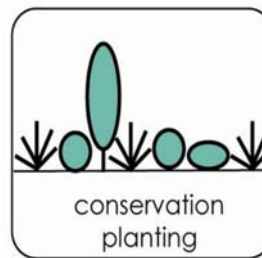
know your rainscaping

This series of factsheets provides an overview of rainscaping: the purpose, the techniques and the benefits of adding landscape enhancements to reduce stormwater runoff. Use the factsheets to help you incorporate rain into your landscape.





Impervious surfaces (hardscape) like roads, sidewalks, driveways and roofs prevent rain from filtering into the ground. Stormwater quickly enters drains and streams, carrying pollutants with it.



Rainscaping captures the rainfall for your landscape. Stormwater enters the ground slowly instead of rushing off, preventing pollution and helping to restore stream habitats.

the stormwater issue:

Impervious surfaces (hardscape) like roads, sidewalks, driveways and roofs prevent rain from filtering into the ground. If rainwater cannot infiltrate the soil, it races downhill, collecting pollutants and eroding our landscapes along the way. The additional volumes of water, sediment and pollutants then empty into streams and tributaries, disrupting habitats downstream. You can make a difference, though, by rainscaping your yard!

what is a rainscape?

Rainscapes are landscape enhancements that reduce stormwater runoff. Most rain that falls on hard surfaces flows to a creek or a storm drain. Storm drains then flow into creeks. This stormwater runoff carries pollutants, causes flooding, erodes streambanks and disturbs aquatic habitats.

In contrast, rainfall on natural surfaces like gardens, forests and meadows soaks into the ground, replenishes groundwater and streams, removes pollutants and provides water for plants. Rainscapes simulate natural drainage to intercept, capture and absorb rain.

This series of factsheets will provide the details you need to rainscape your own yard.

rainscaping techniques defined:



Rain Barrels Capture rainfall coming off roofs and out of gutters and downspouts. They store rainfall to use in the garden at a later date. Once they're full, they must be emptied. Cisterns are similar to rain barrels, just larger. They can be buried or set above ground.



Disconnecting Your Downspout is about detaching a downspout from the storm drain system or driveway and redirecting rainwater to soak into your yard or landscaping. You can also direct water from your downspout or rain barrel (overflow) to your rain garden.



Conservation Plantings Naturalize your landscape to allow rainfall to infiltrate. Turf areas are usually compacted and slightly impervious. By removing turf; aerating and amending the soil; and planting trees, shrubs or perennials, more rainwater can absorb into the ground and plants' roots, preventing additional runoff.



Rain Gardens are slightly recessed gardens designed to capture and temporarily hold rainfall flowing through your yard (runoff). Water moving through the rain garden irrigates the plants and rids itself of pollutants through the plants and soil.

how to decide which one is best for you:

The great thing about rainscaping is you can use one or more techniques to suit yourself and the needs of your landscape best. For instance, if you live in a townhome with a small yard, a rain garden might not be appropriate due to size limitations, but a cistern or rain barrel may be perfect to help you water those patio plants. For residential and commercial landscapes that can afford the space, rain gardens provide the greatest benefits. They remove and filter stormwater, while providing beautiful scenery within your landscape. Some homeowners find a combination of techniques is the best solution, such as a rain barrel and raingarden. If you want to help, but have little time or money, downspout disconnection is for you!

what are the benefits?

environmental: Rainscaping helps restore stream health, recharge groundwater and provide habitat for plants, animals and birds.

economic: Rainscaping reduces water costs, reduces energy costs and increases property values. Some municipalities even offer credits or rebates to homeowners with rainscaping in their yards.

aesthetic: Rainscaping provides opportunities to beautify your landscape with blooming flowers and provides four seasons of interest in the garden.



how do you choose?

Whether you own three acres or a simple patio garden, there is a rainscape solution for your property! Drawing on horticulture, engineering and landscape architecture expertise, we have featured each of these techniques in a factsheet to help you decide which option is most suitable to your tastes, maintenance requirements and landscape condition. Whether you make a big change or a small one, you can do your part to help restore our watersheds. Visit our website at www.go.ncsu.edu/rainscaping to begin your rainscape journey.