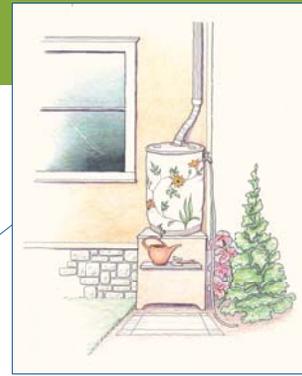


Get the most out of rain

Ideas for creating a rain-friendly yard



Save water with rain barrels

A rain barrel is a container that collects and stores rainwater from downspouts and rooftops for future use watering lawns and gardens. Generally a rain barrel is made using a 55-gallon drum, a vinyl garden hose, PVC couplings, a screen grate to remove debris and keep insects out, and other materials found at neighborhood hardware stores.

Rain barrels can be constructed in a number of ways, but they all serve the same purpose — to collect rainwater and decrease the amount of stormwater runoff that leaves your property.

During the summer months it is estimated that nearly 40 percent of household water is used for lawn and garden maintenance. A rain barrel collects water and stores it for those times that you need it most — during the dry summer months. Using rain barrels potentially helps homeowners lower water bills, while also improving the vitality of plants, flowers, trees, and lawns.

For more information about rain barrels, please visit www.marc.org/Environment/Water/rainbarrels.htm.

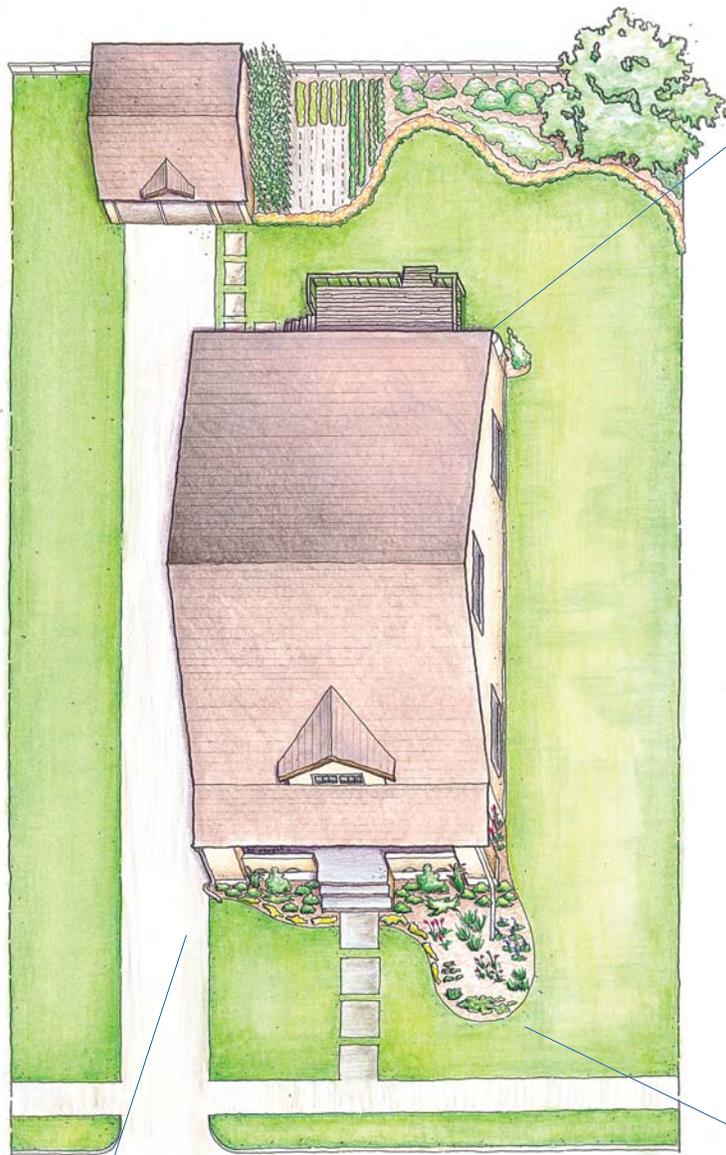


Build a rain garden

A great way to complement your rain barrel and increase your property's ability to absorb runoff is through a rain garden. Rain gardens can be a fun and easy way to learn about beautiful native plants as well as help to improve water quality and reduce flooding.

Rain gardens typically absorb much more water than the same size area of lawn. They are drought resistant, winter hardy and less prone to destructive insects and diseases. Rain gardens create a preferred habitat for birds, butterflies and dragonflies. These specialty gardens are versatile; they can be any size or shape imaginable, but to maximize their benefit you should build them in an existing low spot or near the drainage area of your rain barrel or downspout.

For more information on rain gardens visit www.marc.org/Environment/Water/raingardens.htm.



Redirect downspouts

Take full advantage of the rain that comes off your roof by making sure that your downspouts deposit rainwater where it can be put to good use. Redirect downspouts to gardens, grassy areas, rain barrels — places where water can infiltrate the ground and roots of plants, decreasing the amount of water that goes down storm drains.

Rain is naturally soft and devoid of minerals, chlorine, fluoride, and other harmful chemicals. The chemicals and hard water from many of our municipal water systems can add to chemical imbalances in soil and damage sensitive plants. Rainwater from the roofs of houses picks up very little contamination, and is very healthy for plants.

Use extension gutters or splash blocks to help direct the flow of water if your downspout isn't long enough. If directing stormwater to a yard, try to discharge the water at least five feet from foundations to prevent potential leakage into the house.



For more information please visit www.marc.org/Environment/Water or call 816/474-4240.

Why disconnect your downspout?

When communities construct buildings, sidewalks, and paved parking lots, they remove much of the natural vegetation in areas and increase the amount of impervious surfaces. (surfaces that cannot absorb water) These impervious surfaces can no longer moderate the impacts of heavy rains by slowing down and absorbing rainwater. When it rains, water flows across impervious surfaces, collecting pollutants like pet waste, salt, pesticides, fertilizer, oil and grease, litter and soil along the way. Increased volumes of rainwater, or runoff, flows untreated through a system of storm sewers into area rivers, lakes and streams. Polluted stormwater can kill or damage plants, fish and wildlife, while degrading water quality in local watersheds.

Instructions

What can you do to protect your watershed?

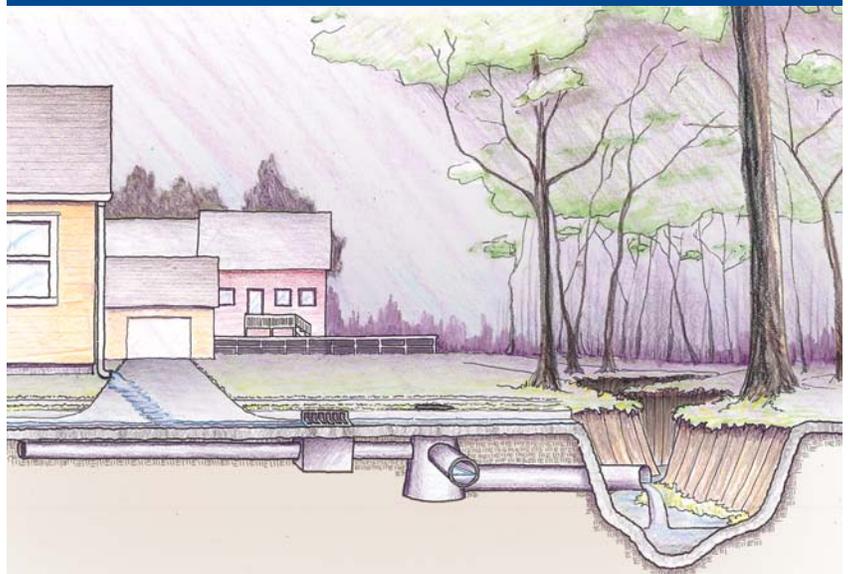
1. Landscape with native plants, grasses and flowers
2. Don't dump anything down storm drains
3. Pick up your pet waste
4. Avoid overapplication of pesticides or lawn chemicals
5. Redirect your downspouts to drain in your lawn or garden
6. Don't wash your car in your driveway or on the street
7. Use rainbarrels or raingardens to conserve rain water

www.marc.org/Environment/Water

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Rain, roofs and runoff

We All Live In A Watershed. A watershed is a land area that drains into a waterbody, like a creek, river or lake. Think of a watershed as a series of funnels nested inside each other. For example, when it rains, all the water from a watershed may travel to a creek or waterbody. From there, the creek will flow into a larger stream, which in turn collects water from a larger watershed. In Kansas City, most of the water eventually drains into the Missouri River, which is one of North America's largest watersheds.



For more information, visit
www.marc.org/Environment/Water