

CLEAN WATER BEGINS AT HOME

Landscape Design

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Runoff from home lawns and gardens flows into storm sewers or into roadside ditches which lead to surface and groundwater. Runoff results from rainstorms and from lawn and garden watering practices. Pollutant sources include: fertilizer, pesticides, soil eroding from bare areas, pet wastes, and oil or grease that may have leaked or spilled on to the ground, driveway or street.

Along with carrying pollutants, runoff from yards, roofs, and paved areas can increase erosion in streams, wash away wildlife habitat or smother streambeds with mud.

The ways in which home landscapes are designed and maintained directly affects runoff and our water quality. Landscapes can be designed to retain water on-site, encourage infiltration, and even to “treat” some pollutants through small ponds and wetlands. Trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and other plantings can be selected with water quality protection in mind. Here’s what you can do:

- Reduce the amount of paved surfaces to increase the natural infiltration of stormwater into the ground and reduce the potential for pollutants to run off-site into storm drains or ditches. When installing a new driveway or sidewalk, consider a gravel bed, brick and flagstones, bricks or interlocking pavers, crushed shells or stone and bark chips. These porous surfaces encourage some infiltration.
- Plant pest resistant, native plants and shrubs. This reduces maintenance for you and the need for additional fertilizers and pesticides, in addition to reducing the amount of watering needed during the summer months. Remove exotic and invasive plants which can destroy the natural diversity of an existing habitat.
- Retain or create vegetative buffer zones adjacent to creeks and drainage ways.
- Landscape for wildlife. Healthy wildlife and clean water are interrelated. Many practices which help protect water quality also enhance wildlife habitat. Habitats which encourage birds, bees, butterflies, and microorganisms help to sustain natural systems with natural pollutant reduction and soil conservation functions. Landscapes which benefit wildlife also help improve watershed water retention.

For more information call Clark County Master Gardeners at (360) 882-0936 or the City of Battle Ground (360) 342-5070 or check out our website at www.cityofbg.org



