

RAINGARDENS REDUCE RUNOFF

STORMWATER RUNOFF is rain or snowmelt that moves across impermeable surfaces (roof tops, driveways, roads, parking lots and other surfaces that do not allow the water to soak into the ground) and enters storm drain systems or directly flows over land making its way to waterbodies, such as lakes, rivers and bays.

RAIN GARDENS collect stormwater runoff, filter pollutants, and allow water to soak into the ground which recharges our groundwater. By using native plants (naturally adapted to theregion, low maintenance and do not require fertilizers) you are promoting a healthy natural ecosystem and providing essential habitat to local butterflies, birds and bees.

STORMWATER POLLUTION occurs as **STORMWATER RUNOFF** flows over surfaces, collecting and transporting natural and human-made pollutants into nearby waterbodies. Pollutants—like motor oil, fertilizers, pesticides, sediment, animal waste and garbage—can be harmful to aquatic life and create human health risks. Stormwater pollution is considered non-point source (NPS) pollution because it comes from many different sources and people—not just a single source. Because of this, stormwater pollution is harder to prevent. To decrease the amount of pollutants entering the water we need to do our part to change what we do on land.

ESTUARY - A semi-enclosed coastal body of water that connects with the open sea; a transition zone where saltwater from the ocean mixes with freshwater from land and rivers.

WATERSHED - An area or ride of land that separates water flowing to different rivers, basins or seas.

IMPACTS FROM STORMWATER RUNOFF

Harmful algal blooms: Too much nitrogen in our waters, from sources such as fertilizer and human and animal waste, can cause excess growth of algae, called an algal bloom. This can lower oxygen levels in the water below the level healthy for marine life.

Restricted shellfish harvest: Bacteria and pathogens in the bay from animal and human waste can make shellfish unsafe to eat.

Harm/kill aquatic life: Aquatic life can mistake garbage —like plastic bags, bottles and cigarette butts— for food or get tangled in garbage.

Stress aquatic organisms: Pollutants can create poor water quality and sediment can cloud water which can stress aquatic plants and animals.

WAYS TO REDUCE STORMWATER POLLUTION

- Reduce/eliminate use of fertilizers and pesticides. Use organic alternatives or time-released fertilizers.
- Dispose of household hazardous materials properly using town collection programs.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn or dispose of them according to the recommendations of your town.
- Replace paved surfaces and lawns with a native vegetation garden or rain garden.
- Divert water from your gutters to the lawn or garden or install a rain barrel.
- Wash your car on the lawn or use a commercial car wash service.
- Pick up after your pet and dispose of the waste properly.



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