
Sustainable Development Principles and Stormwater Management

It is in everyone's best interest to manage stormwater on your own property. Managing stormwater consists of several methods that can be implemented separately or in combination with one another. Proper management of stormwater runoff directs runoff away from neighboring properties, slows the rate of runoff to the storm sewer system, and filters pollutants.

Appropriate management of stormwater runoff is also a key principle of sustainable development, and provides two important benefits.

First, by slowing the rate at which stormwater leaves a property and enters the storm sewer system, stormwater flooding can be reduced.

Second, as stormwater flows over and through vegetation, it is naturally filtered, which can reduce the load of pollutants that

There are a few simple things you can do to incorporate sustainable development principles on your property and help the Village manage stormwater runoff in the process.

Disconnect downspouts from the storm sewer system.

It is the Village's policy that new homes and additions splash downspouts at grade unless it would adversely affect the

adjacent properties. However, if your downspouts are presently connected to the storm sewer system, and you would like to disconnect them, please take the following points under consideration:

The area surrounding the downspout should have enough permeable surface to soak up the stormwater without causing flooding;

Your stormwater must not drain onto your neighbor's property. If your downspout is located between houses, you can use an extension or elbow to redirect the water to your front or rear yard;

To avoid seepage into your home's foundation, the land around the foundation should slope away from the home. If this is not presently the case, you will need to obtain a grading permit from the Village of Winnetka prior to regrading the area in question;

The downspout extension, or extension plus splash block, should end at least five feet away from the building foundation, but not at the property line;

Precautions should be taken for stormwater that flows over walkways or other paved areas since the water will freeze in cold weather and cause slippery conditions. Stormwater will not be permitted to drain over public sidewalks or directly into the street.

Install rain barrels.

Lawn and garden watering can make up to 40% of your household water use during the summer months.



Installing a rain barrel can significantly reduce the amount of water that is being used for this purpose. It is thought that plants perform better with rainwater rather than tap water as it is chlorine-free. Rainwater collected in rain barrels can be used to water your garden, wash your car or bicycle, water potted plants, water the lawn, clean garden tools, or many other possible uses.

To install a rain barrel, choose a downspout on your house or garage that is close to the plants you water the most. Then, place the rain barrel under the downspout, so that the water from the downspouts enters through a screen on top of the barrel.

The downspouts will most likely need to be reconfigured, slightly, to allow direct discharge into the top of the barrel.

You may want to elevate the rain barrel off of the ground slightly, by use of concrete blocks or bricks, to allow for the use of a spigot at the bottom of the barrel so that either a hose can be attached or the spigot can be used to fill watering cans.

Install a rain garden.

Another method of managing stormwater on your property is by installing a rain garden. A rain garden can be located in an existing or proposed depressed area in your yard that can collect stormwater runoff from the downspouts, sump pump discharge or runoff from your yard or impermeable surfaces on your property.



The area should be planted with deep-rooted, water-loving plants. Deep-rooted, native plants can absorb more water than turf grass, and once established, require minimal maintenance.

The rain garden should be kept at least ten feet away from your home or your neighbor's home to prevent possible flooding, and should be located in an area that receives at least 6 hours of sunlight a day.



Rain gardens not only help to filter pollutants out of stormwater runoff, protecting the river and lake, they also help to recharge the local groundwater, remove standing water from your yard, reduce mosquito breeding, increase beneficial insects that eliminate pest insects, reduce potential of home flooding, create a habitat for birds and butterflies, reduce garden maintenance and enhance garden enjoyment.

Use permeable paving.

Permeable paving can also help manage stormwater on site. Permeable paving material has openings within the material that can allow water to pass through the surface and infiltrate into the ground.



Concrete or asphalt driveways, walkways and patios can be replaced with paving bricks or other pavers, stone or gravel.

Please remember, when doing any work on your property, check with the Village of Winnetka Community Development Department to determine whether a permit will be required for the proposed work.