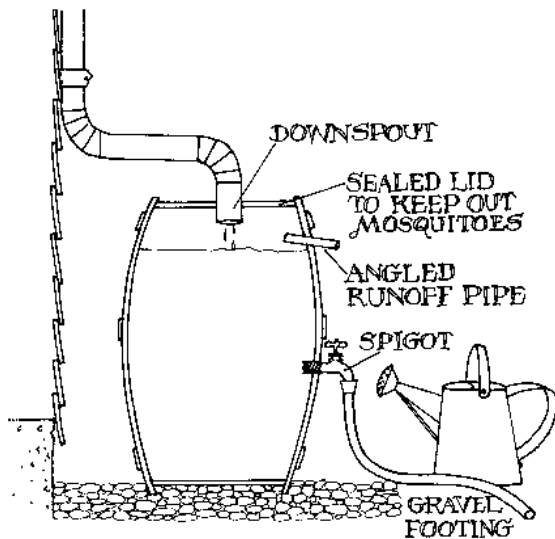


Wayne County and Water Conservation and Pollution Control for Everyone!

As we develop the land and create more impervious (non-porous) surfaces, water has a harder time soaking into the soil to replenish our ground water like it naturally would. The water instead remains on the ground surface and can lead to large run-off events, especially after a storm. Why is having excess run-off water a problem? As water runs over surfaces it picks up pollutants such as, residual oil from automobiles, nutrients from fertilizers applied to agricultural lands, and lawns and excess water in the sewer systems can overload our water treatment plants causing some untreated water to leak back into the environment.

There are many different methods that you can implement for preventing the build-up of run-off water which leads to water conservation. Two simple and popular methods include installing a rain garden or barrel. Rain gardens are just what they sound like; a regular garden in your yard filled with plants that are designed to absorb water. The first step to planting a rain garden is selecting the right location. Low lying areas of your yard that gather water or areas that disrupt the flow of water are good places to start. If you need to excavate the area, be careful of how deep you dig so that you do not disrupt natural aquifers and also make sure to be away from the foundation of your house to prevent leakage into your home. Once you get the area all set up, the final step is planting! It is important to do your research because some plants are tolerant of moist or very wet conditions and others are not and will not survive. There are specific plants that are listed for these types of gardens. Information is available locally at the District office or at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wayne County. Rain gardens are not only aesthetically pleasing, but serve functional roles to absorb excess water and filter toxins out of the water before it replenishes the ground water supply (our drinking water).



Rain barrels are large (usually plastic) barrels that are placed under a downspout, such as from your gutter system of your house to collect water. The water can later be used for watering gardens or other purposes. The set-up of a rain barrel may vary, but generally consists of a large barrel, usually a lid to prevent insects from getting in, a system to prevent overflow, and a spigot to empty the barrel or to hook a hose up to. Rain barrels prevent excess water from getting into the sewer system and also perform a method of water conservation to preserve our limited freshwater supply. If you are interested in learning more about rain gardens or barrels, contact the Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District at (315) 946-4136 for more information.

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(Source: "A Country Garden for Your Backyard" by M. Smith)

References:

Picture accessed through: *Urban Design Tools – Low Impact Development.*
http://www.lid-stormwater.net/raincist_specs.htm