

## Conserve Water

- Apply mulch around plants to reduce water lost through evaporation and conserve soil moisture.
- Apply water where plants can use it – at the root zone. Overhead watering disperses water over an area larger than Necessary causing much of it to be lost through evaporation and waters weeds as well. Drip irrigation or hand watering at the base of plants places water where it is needed.
- Group plants according to water needs. Keep high water-use plantings (such as colorful annuals) near the home where they can be efficiently watered.
- Use plants that require low water inputs wherever possible. Native species are often an excellent choice because they are adapted to regional climates.
- Avoid watering the lawn. Cool season grasses may turn brown and go dormant in the middle of the summer, but will re-grow when rain and cooler weather returns.
- Water early in the morning when evaporation is lower than in the heat of the day. (EPA, 2008)



## Do You Know?

**Q:** What is the biggest cause of water pollution in Minnesota?

**A:** NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION!

This means we all contribute to runoff problems. When you clean up your street, you prevent harmful substances from entering our lakes and rivers.

Common non-point sources of pollution:

- Litter
- Household hazardous products
- Motor oil
- Car washing detergents
- Fertilizers
- Pet and animal waste
- Boat discharges
- Septic systems
- Pesticides
- Soil erosion
- Leaves left on streets and driveways (EPA, 2008)

## Reduce Runoff from Your Property

When it rains or snows in urban areas, storm water washes over streets, roofs, paved areas and other hard surfaces, moving large volumes of water, sediment and pollution to sewers and adjoining water bodies. Harvest and keep rainwater on your site by using rain barrels, rain gardens and permeable paving.

## Rain Barrels

Rain barrels allow you to capture and store stormwater runoff directly from gutter downspouts. This time-honored form of water harvesting is very simple to implement. Rain barrels are an easy and inexpensive way to start managing your stormwater. A hose can be connected to move water directly to plants.



Rain gardens are planted areas designed to capture and accumulate water from rooftops and impermeable surfaces surrounding your home or garage.

A rain garden can combine shrubs, grasses, and flowering perennials in depressions that allow water to pool for 24 hours or less after a rain. Vegetation is vital to the proper function of a rain garden. Water is detained in the ponding area until it infiltrates or evaporates. The plants in the rain garden help to infiltrate the water and trap pollutants.



Permeable pavement reduces runoff from impervious surfaces by allowing storm water to pass through surfaces that would otherwise be non-permeable.



These new materials are modifications of traditional concrete, blacktop or pavers that present a solid surface for pedestrian and vehicular traffic while allowing water to move into and through the surface. (Dittmann, 2008)



For more information see: [www.extension.umn.edu/gardeninfo/](http://www.extension.umn.edu/gardeninfo/)

## References:

Dittman, C. 2008. *Residential Stormwater Management: Guidelines for Analysis, Planning, Design and Implementation in Urban Landscapes*. Master of Agriculture Final Project. Department of Horticultural Science. University of Minnesota.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *Greenscaping: The Easy Way to a Greener Healthier Yard*. 2008. <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/green/owners.htm#water>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2008. *What you can do to prevent NPS pollution*. <http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/whatudo.html>

www.extension.umn.edu Copyright © 2008, Regents of the University of Minnesota. All rights reserved. For Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations, please call (800) 876-8636. University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer. The information given in this publication is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by University of Minnesota Extension is implied.