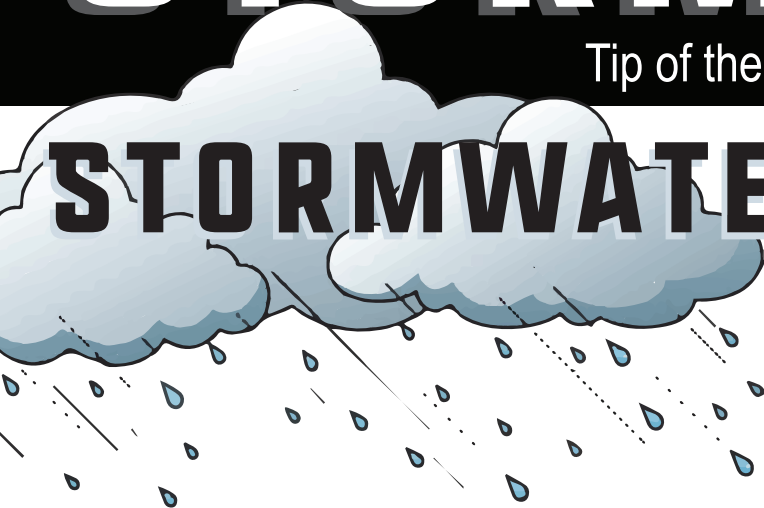


STORMWATER

Tip of the Week

Week 8: February 22, 2022

STORMWATER RUNOFF IS



...precipitation that doesn't soak into the ground where it falls. When rain hits hard, impervious surfaces (driveways, sidewalks, streets, rooftops, parking lots) it's channeled toward stormwater drainage systems. In many communities, like Nitro, these drainage systems empty into natural our waterways without treatment.

But, why is stormwater runoff a problem? **1.** Large volumes can overwhelm storm drains and cause localized flooding. **2.** Runoff gathers sediment and pollutants, which can wind up in natural waterways. **3.** Water that doesn't soak into soil can't recharge local groundwater sources. So, in efforts to decrease the volume of stormwater runoff to minimize pollutants, the EPA's mantra for stormwater runoff management is:

RAIN SLOW SOAK it CLEAN
it DOWN up *Keep it*

Add plants. Incorporate plantings, especially in areas where runoff collects. As runoff soaks into soil, plant roots help to absorb and filter out pollutants.

Protect and plant trees. Like other plant roots, tree roots help absorb and filter runoff. Tree canopies also slow rainfall and spread it over a larger area.

Break up slabs. Replace concrete patio slabs with pavers, flagstones, bricks, or a permeable material (gravel, mulch, crushed shells, or a pervious concrete) that allow water to soak in between items. For driveways, consider using turf block or leaving a strip of grass up the center.

Catch runoff. Install a rain barrel or cistern to catch stormwater runoff from roofs. Use this water for garden plants.

Dig a trench. Use a shallow, gravel-filled trench to catch and slow runoff, especially at the base of a slope or alongside a driveway or patio. For slopes, consider creating a dry creek to catch, slow down and direct runoff or...

Plant a rain garden. A rain garden is designed to catch and slow runoff. It's frequently planted in low areas, at the base of a slope, or near downspout outlets. The design includes soil layers, mulch, and plants, all of which filter rainwater as it seeps into soil.

Cover soil. Depending on the type, bare soil can be like concrete in terms of its ability to absorb water. Cover bare soil with mulch or a ground cover to slow stormwater runoff.

Swap lawn. Trade turf for native plants, which are adapted to local growing conditions and require fewer inputs (once established) than turf.

But remember!

No matter what method you choose, always direct runoff away from your home's foundation and your neighbors. If your property has a steep slope or receives additional runoff from an external source, consult with a professional landscaper to discuss possible solutions.

