

How Can I Control Stormwater on My Property?

Have you ever wondered what you can do to control stormwater on your property? Maybe you experience property damage from excessive water runoff, live in a community that floods frequently, or care about the health of local streams.

Regardless of your motivation, there are many different things you can do to manage stormwater on your property, including:

- **Downspout Disconnect/Redirect** - If your downspouts are directed onto a paved or concrete surface or are directly connected to the storm drain system, look for opportunities to redirect them to lawn and garden areas. Some communities have even passed new ordinances that require this practice. Just be sure that all downspouts are directed away from foundations to avoid basement flooding.
- **Rain Barrels** - Rain barrels capture and hold water until it can be used or slowly released into planted areas. For rain barrels to be effective at controlling stormwater, it is important to have a plan for using the water before installing one.
- **Planting Trees** - Planting trees is a great way to reduce stormwater runoff. If you have a stream on your property, planting trees along the stream can be the best thing you do for water quality and the trees will help prevent the stream from eroding away your property. The more trees the better, but aim for a forest that is at least 35 ft. wide. At the very least don't mow your lawn directly up to the edge of the streambank. Let the grass grow some roots!
- **Meadows** - If trees aren't an option on your property, adding other types of plants is a good substitute. Any areas where lawn can be replaced with ornamental grasses, flowers, and shrubs will have a positive impact on controlling stormwater on your property. Meadows, whether large or small, increase the ability of the land to absorb water. Meadows can be a great way to reduce the amount of time you spend mowing the grass and can be placed in the areas that are the most difficult to mow.
- **Rain Gardens** - One of the best options for managing stormwater on your property is to install a rain garden. A rain garden is a bowl shaped garden that can capture and hold water until it is able to be absorbed into the soil. Rain gardens can be a do-it-yourself project but it may be wise to seek the services of a landscape professional.
- **Pervious Pavers** - Pervious pavers can look very similar to a traditional brick or stone patio, sidewalk, or driveway. The difference is that they are installed with a thick stone base that provides space for water to be stored until it soaks into the ground. They are great for converting hard surfaces that usually make a lot of stormwater, into a surface that absorbs, manages, and reduces stormwater runoff. If you're interested in this, you should probably contact a professional landscaper.

These are just a few of the many options available for controlling stormwater. Many projects you can tackle on your own but if you have complicated stormwater issues on your property, consider getting help from an engineer or landscape professional.

If you have additional questions about stormwater, or you are just interested in learning more, you can find a full series of videos and articles in the [Penn State Extension Stormwater Basics series](#) .