



EARTH CARE @LEWINSVILLE

CARING FOR CREATION BY MANAGING STORMWATER RUNOFF IN OUR YARDS

When we think of managing stormwater in our own yards, our first concern is often to avoid floods in the basement and puddles in the yard. It may seem that the best way to accomplish those goals is to move as much of the rain that falls on roofs, driveways, and other impervious surfaces on our properties as quickly as possible into the nearest storm sewer. However, channeling rain into hard-sided pipes erodes local streams and causes additional problems downstream, including erosion, sedimentation, flooding, pollution, and other forms of environmental degradation.

As Christians who embrace our duties to be good stewards of the earth and good neighbors, we should consider another approach: capturing rainfall and allowing as much of it as possible to infiltrate (soak into the ground) on our own properties, as happens in undisturbed woodlands. There are a variety of strategies to accomplish this goal, including capturing rainfall in rain barrels or cisterns; directing runoff into rain gardens, French drains, or other designated infiltration areas; and replacing impervious surfaces with pervious pavers, gravel, or other materials that allow water to filter into the ground. In our increasingly dense suburban neighborhoods, we may not be able to infiltrate all of the rainfall we receive, but we can reduce the runoff from our properties, and protect our downstream neighbors, human and animal, in the process. Even redirecting a single downspout can help.

For more information, see the City of Falls Church's excellent compilation of information and links: <http://www.fallschurchva.gov/332/Educational-Materials>.