

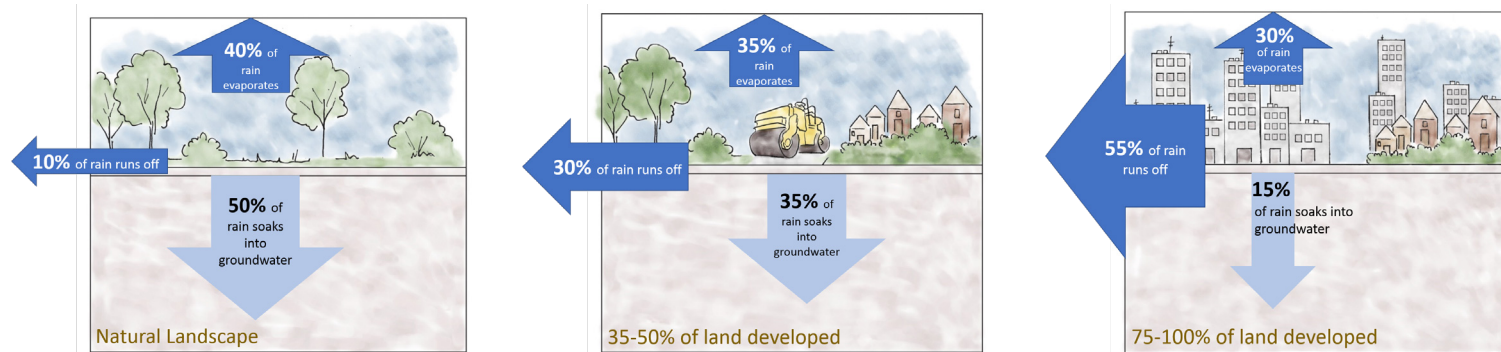
# Stormwater and Your Yard

Soil and plants act as natural sponges: they help rainwater (also called **stormwater**) soak into the ground where it falls and naturally filter out pollutants. As people move into Clark County, we continue to replace forests and prairies with houses, roads, and other hard surfaces. When rain falls on these hard surfaces, it can no longer soak into the ground, so it quickly becomes runoff that can cause flooding. As this stormwater runs across our yards and roads, it also picks up whatever it touches—like oil or chemicals—and carries these pollutants into our streams and lakes. But we can help reduce the problems caused by **impermeable surfaces** by taking steps to cut pollution and slow the flow of stormwater.

**Stormwater** is all the water that falls from the sky, like rain or snow.

**Impermeable** (or impervious) surfaces are hard surfaces that rainwater cannot get through (e.g., buildings, roads, concrete driveways, parking lots)

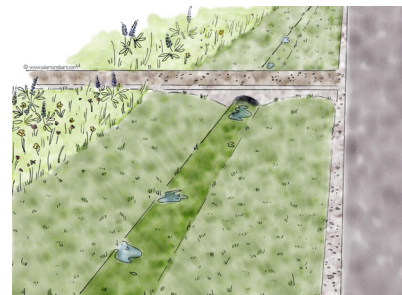
**Permeable** (or pervious) surfaces are areas that water can get through, allowing it to soak into the ground and aquifers (e.g. yards, forests, gardens).



## What are stormwater facilities?

New developments in Clark County are required to have facilities that collect and treat stormwater on site. These **stormwater facilities** can take many forms, from planted ditches (also called **swales** or **bioswales**), to ponds, to complex underground facilities. When properly maintained, they help filter pollutants and slow down stormwater so that it can soak into the ground, imitating the natural benefits of soil and plants.

While some stormwater facilities are publicly owned and maintained, many are not. If you live in a residential development, you likely share responsibility for maintaining a stormwater facility with your neighbors or homeowners' association (HOA). To learn more about stormwater facilities and your responsibilities visit [stormwaterpartners.com](http://stormwaterpartners.com).



## How to Manage Stormwater on your Property

### Use a rain barrel

Rain barrels collect and store rainwater that falls on roofs and flows down a downspout. Collected water can be used to water gardens or lawns. This reduces stormwater runoff from your property and saves you money on your water bill.



### Build a rain garden

A rain garden is a shallow bowl-shaped garden that uses soils and plants to soak up, filter, and clean rainwater runoff from a nearby roof, driveway, or another hard surface. Rain gardens help protect our creeks by capturing rainwater before it leaves your property, slowing it down and allowing it to absorb into your soil.



## Reduce hard surfaces

Remove pavement or replace it with permeable pavement that water can soak through. This increases the land available for planting and reduces runoff.

## Plant native plants and trees

Plants and trees are great at holding soil in place, slowing water down, and filtering out pollutants from roads and driveways. Use native species to reduce the need for additional watering, fertilizers, or other supplements.



## Compost

Use compost to help your plants grow and help your soil retain more water. This reduces the amount of stormwater that can run off your property and helps capture and break down pollutants on site. Visit [clarkcountycomposts.org](http://clarkcountycomposts.org) to learn more about composting at home.

## Create a stream buffer

If you live next to a stream, you can protect it from pollution by planting a buffer of plants along the banks. Plant native trees, shrubs, and groundcover to help filter pollutants and catch small soil particles (also called sediment) running off your yard before they enter the stream. If you have livestock or a dog, add some fencing to keep them out of the stream to prevent erosion and protect plants and wildlife.



## Don't use yard chemicals

The best way to make sure our watershed stays clean and healthy is to eliminate pollutants at the source. Avoid using chemical inputs like pesticides and fertilizers. If you do use them, be sure to apply them correctly to lower the chances they will pollute stormwater runoff.

## Talk to your friends and neighbors

Stormwater management is a group effort! Share your knowledge with others in our community to help maximize the impact of your actions.



## For more information

To learn more about your role in managing stormwater in our community and how you can protect watershed health visit [clarkcd.org/watershedstewards](http://clarkcd.org/watershedstewards) or [stormwaterpartners.com](http://stormwaterpartners.com).

Visit [naturallyardcare.org](http://naturallyardcare.org) or [growsmartgrowsafe.org](http://growsmartgrowsafe.org) to learn more about natural and low-impact yard care strategies.

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