

Stormwater Management Tip Sheet

? Did You Know?

80% of Calgary's storm drains go directly to the river¹? That means that anything that goes down the storm drain, including runoff from the street and your yard, goes directly into our Bow and Elbow Rivers.

Hardened (or impermeable) surfaces such as streets, driveways, buildings and parking lots prevent rain and snow melt from soaking into the ground, disrupting the natural water cycle and preventing natural filtration through vegetation and soil.

What are we putting into our waterways?

- Chemical fertilizers from our lawns
- Toxic cleaners that we use to wash our vehicles
- Grease and other automotive fluids
- Garbage and a whole host of other contaminants
- All of this ends up affecting ecosystems throughout our waterways – impacting the land, wildlife, and our groundwater

Learn more about the City of Calgary's Stormwater Facts

www.calgary.ca/stormwater_fact_sheet.pdf



Rain Gardens are planted depressions that collect, soak up, & filter storm water runoff from roofs, & paved surfaces.

1. Stormwater quality retrofit program. (2014). Retrieved October 24, 2014 from <http://www.calgary.ca/UEP/Water/Pages/construction-projects/Stormwater-quality-retrofit-program/Stormwater-Quality-Retrofit-Program.aspx>

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📣 Take action! There are many things that we can do on our own properties and in our homes to better manage stormwater and keep our rivers clean and healthy:

> No Cost

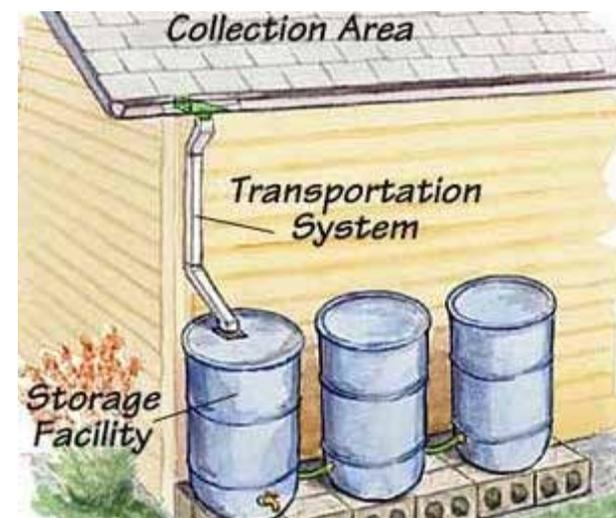
- Ensure your downspouts all drain into an area where water can be soaked up (like a nearby lawn, tree, or flower bed). Downspouts should drain at least 2m away from your foundation.
- Collect leaves in the fall to ensure they do not blow down the street, blocking nearby storm drains. Compost your leaves at home or participate in the City of Calgary's fall Leaf & Pumpkin composting program.
- Regularly check your nearest storm drain to make sure it's clean and clear of debris in order to avoid overland flooding when it rains or snow melts.
- Avoid de-icing salts in winter. De-icing salt travels to the nearest storm drain and can be hazardous to fresh water aquatic life as well as your lawn or garden. Shovel snow early and often instead.
- Pick up after your pets. Compost your pet waste using a pet digester or at least dispose of waste properly at home and in public spaces. If left on compacted lawns and paved surfaces, it will run off and contaminate the nearest waterway.
- Pick up your cigarette butts. When it rains they are carried to the nearest storm drain and are often mistaken for food and swallowed by aquatic life.

> Low Cost

- Install a rain barrel at every downspout. Rain barrels help slow the flow of water to the river during heavy rains and allow you to make use of a free, untreated source of water in your yard and garden.
- Aerate your lawn. A well aerated lawn can absorb rain but a compacted lawn acts as a "hard surface" allowing little absorption, causing water and pollutants to run-off and be carried to the nearest storm drain.
- Increase the number of gardens, flower beds, and trees on your property. Plants and trees slow the rain down on their leaves so it hits the ground and can be absorbed into the soil more slowly.
- Wash your car at a commercial carwash instead of on your driveway or the street. Metals, fuels and solvents wash off a car when it is cleaned, running down the street to the nearest storm drain.
- Have your car maintained at a licensed facility. Maintaining your car at home can lead to spills of fuels and solvents that may end up in a nearby storm drain.
- Avoid chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Pesticides are a major source of water contamination and a leading cause of poisonings, particularly in children & pets.
- Switch to natural personal care and cleaning products. Our sewage treatment facilities are only designed to deal effectively with bacteria and other disease pathogens. Chemicals and solvents usually pass unchecked and freely enter lakes and rivers.

> Investment

- Increase the amount of permeable area on your property by removing unnecessary pavement and concrete or replacing them with permeable options.



Get your rain barrels and rainwater harvesting information from our helpful EcoStore staff.

www.greencalgary.org

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