



GrayIsGreen

Who are we?

Gray Is Green is an online gathering of older adult Americans aspiring to create a green legacy for the future. As environmentally conscious elders, we respond to a generational call: to co-create a future of economic justice, ecological sustainability and social justice.

We hold next generations of humans in mind and consider the future of ecosystems and other species. We are alert to the historic challenges facing our planet. And we are aware of the question arising from descendants generations hence:

What did you do, when you knew?

What do we do?

We aspire to embrace our eldership, living beyond consumerism and ageism. **Our Curriculum for Gray-Green Living** offers a variety of ways to join—and re-engage with—this elder movement.

We offer a periodic newsletter, a speaker's bureau, online resources, a [Facebook page](#) for relevant updates. In partnership with congenial organizations, we serve as a central clearinghouse of ideas and communications for older adults interested in greening their lives, learning about sustainability, advocating for sound public policy, being creative stewards or grandparents, emerging as elders, and mentoring young people.

*We invite **you** to get involved!*

www.grayisgreen.org

Community Resilience Community Stormwater Impacts

In urban and suburban areas, impervious surfaces generate stormwater¹ which is a major non-point source of pollution. Stormwater may be channeled into culverts and pipes that discharge into rivers and streams, but it is still considered a non-point pollution source because the pollutants come from all the surfaces that get wet when it rains.

Stormwater Pollutants

Pollutants from stormwater² can include all these things that we see every day:

- Oil, grease, and fluids from vehicles
- Fertilizer, herbicides, and other garden chemicals
- Bacteria from pet waste and failing septic systems
- Soil from construction sites
- Soap from equipment washing
- Accidental spills and leaky containers³
- Street litter, such as fast food wrappers and drink containers⁴

Decreasing Run-Off from Impervious Surfaces

There are a number of ways to reduce the amount of runoff and pollution from our homes and communities by using vegetation and natural designs. These methods are collectively called green infrastructure⁵ as opposed to the more traditional concrete pipes, tanks and treatment systems that are called gray infrastructure. A few of the more common examples are:

rain barrels, bio-swales, rain gardens and pervious pavement.

Rain Barrels

We can reduce runoff by collecting rainwater in rain barrels⁶ and using it to water plants later, or simply letting it flow out and soak into the ground during drier conditions. Your local wastewater treatment facility or watershed association might sponsor rain barrel distribution programs. Rain barrels⁷ are gaining in popularity for diverting run-off away from home foundations.

Bio-Swales and Rain Gardens

We can also link our impervious surfaces to drain into landscaping. Two very simple and common practices are bio-swales and rain gardens. Bio-swales⁸ are depressions that allow water to collect and slowly soak into the ground. Rain gardens⁹ are also depressions that allow water to soak into the ground, but are landscaped with garden plants. Since they often appear to be ordinary gardens, rain gardens¹⁰ can be an attractive addition to the landscape.

These landscaping options can be very simple or highly engineered, depending on the site soil conditions that allow water to percolate into the ground and the slope of the property.

Pervious paving

There are places where we need to have a hard surface and avoid

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Community Resilience: Community Stormwater Impacts

muddy conditions. Impervious pavement can be replaced by various options that will allow water to soak into the ground. These pervious pavements¹¹ may include special mixes of asphalt or concrete, or paving blocks; all with openings to allow water through and reduce run off.

1 http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/urban_facts.cfm

2 <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/stormwater/introduction/stormwater-runoff.aspx>

3 <http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/waterandland/stormwater/introduction/stormwater-runoff.aspx>

4 http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/marinedebris/upload/508_Trash-Free-Waters_Urban-Coastal-Factsheet_Final.pdf

5 http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/gi_what.cfm

6 <http://www.raingardennetwork.com/rainbarrels.htm>

7 http://reducerunoff.org/rain_barrels.htm

8 http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/gi_what.cfm#bioswales

9 <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/pdf/rgmanual.pdf>

10 <http://nemo.uconn.edu/raingardens/>

11 http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/gi_what.cfm#permeablepavements



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