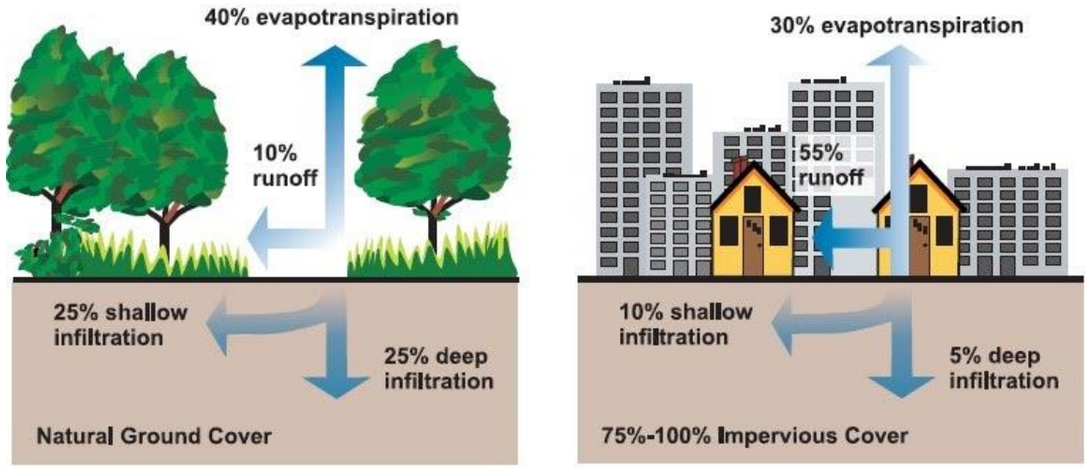
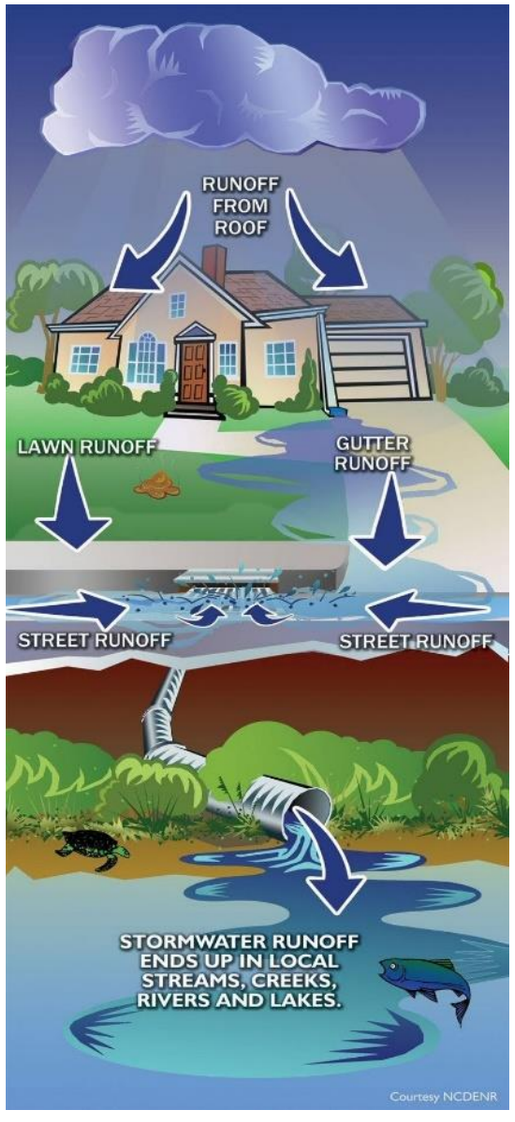
What are Hard Surfaces?

Synonyms: Impervious, Impenetrable, Impermeable, Paved Surfaces

Hard surfaces are surfaces that allow little or no stormwater infiltration into the ground. Impervious surfaces are completely human-created and are an unnatural part of most ecosystems. Everything that falls on an impervious surface (trash, animal waste, chemicals, oils, sediment, etc.) washes off of those surfaces during rain events, often on a direct path to local streams or water bodies.





Reducing Hard Surfaces

Pave Less and Landscape More

Pave only the area needed on your property. Landscaped areas absorb water and generate less water runoff than hard-surface areas.

Pave with Pervious Surface

Pervious pavement (i.e. pervious pavers, pervious concrete, etc.) slows down, soaks in & cleans up stormwater naturally.

Plant a Rain Garden

Deep rooted, native plants arranged in a bowl-shaped garden slow and filter rainwater from impervious surfaces before it enters streams and rivers.

Plan a Green Roof

Engineered to keep the roof watertight and provide an environment for plants to thrive, green roofs recreate lost green space at the roof level. They act like a sponge absorbing rain water, slowing down and releasing cleaner runoff. Besides protecting water quality, green roofs have the added benefit of reducing energy costs by providing another layer of insulation.

Plant Trees & Shrubs

The roots hold water in the ground, slowing runoff and reducing soil erosion.

Collect Rainwater for Future Use

Catch spring and summer showers in a rain barrel to water plants on dry summer days. If you use sprinklers, direct them away from pavement.

If Your Home Has a Drainage Ditch or Swale, Do Not Enclose It

An open ditch carries more water than a pipe and allows for some infiltration.

Wash Your Car Responsibly

If washing at home, do so over gravel or in the yard to avoid soapy runoff from entering the storm drains.

Increasing Infiltration

Green infrastructure can be used to address stormwater runoff and sewer overflow problems. Green infrastructure works by slowing down the runoff, spreading it out over the land, and slowly soaking it into the ground, or in some cases reusing the water onsite. These techniques also help to remove pollutants from runoff by allowing plants to filter out pollutants as the water slowly infiltrates into the ground. Some examples of green infrastructure techniques include rain gardens, pervious pavement, rain barrels and green roofs.

Rain Gardens:

- Reduce mosquito breeding.
- Filter runoff pollution.
- Increase beneficial insects that eliminate pest insects.
- Recharge local groundwater.
- Improve water quality.
- Protect rivers and streams.
- Reduce potential of home flooding.

Rain Barrels:

- Better for your plants.
  (Rainwater is naturally softened water, free of chlorine, fluoride, lime, calcium and other chemicals.)
- Saves you money.
- Better for times of drought.
- Better for your house.
  (Instead of having your downspouts come directly along your foundation.)
- Bragging rights for water conservation.
- Helps water treatment.

Pervious Pavement:

- Replaces completely impervious surfaces with partially impervious surfaces.
- Reduces stormwater runoff rate and volume.
- Reduces loads of some pollutants in surface runoff by reducing the volume of stormwater leaving a site.

Green Roofs:

- Provides rainwater buffers.
- Purifies the air.
- Reduces the ambient temperature.
- Regulates indoor temperature.
- Saves energy.
- Encourages biodiversity in the city.

For more information please contact the Wayne Soil & Water Conservation District

428 W. Liberty Street Wooster, Ohio 44691
330-263-5376
Website: www.wayneswcd.org
Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/WayneSWCD/
Follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/wayneswcd

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